Audiencing Strategies and Student Collaboration in Digitally-mediated Genres of Writing in English

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

To my loving family: mom, dad, and my husband, I dedicate this PhD to you.
To my little boys (Muhana and Qaboos) who shared with me my PhD journey;
I wish this to be a push for you to continue your education.

Abstract

This thesis presents an investigation into the experience of ESL Higher Education young writers when composing three online genres: academic text, diary texts, and blog texts. Central to this investigation is the authenticity of audience and directing texts to 'real' readers. Hence, technological tools are utilised in order to approximate such experience of writing for real readers.

A qualitative case study was employed over three months of an academic semester at an Omani Higher Education College. Two cases participated in the study of overall 17 students across both cases: 5 males and 12 females and 10 students in case 1 and 7 students in case 2. To attain an in-depth understanding of the cases; different tools of data collection were deployed, including: interviews, classroom observation, reflective diary for recording student perceptions and experiences, and three forms of written texts were collected from the participating students: academic essay, diary, and blog. Thus the reflective diary was both a genre of writing and a data collection method.

The study findings highlight that having only a teacher as an 'audience' restricted students' attempts to focus on content, and most of this focus was given to shaping texts in accordance with student perceptions of teacher approved organisation and representation of text. Whereas blogging provided an opportunity to think of a wider range of readers and therefore a greater tendency to author personally selected texts. Also, diary was mostly associated with teacher-audience; though some writers enjoyed writing diary for personal use, the fact that these diary texts vary in accordance with these different understandings of audience offers further credence to claims about the role of real and assumed readers in shaping texts.

The significance of the current study is that it offers practical and pedagogical thinking for teaching writing in ESL exploiting the affordances of technology in teaching process writing. It suggests that varying both audience and genres in relation to classroom writing tasks can have benefits for student writers in terms of their understanding of audience, their shaping of text for an audience and increased investment in the content of what they write. It offers insights into problems and issues felt by young writers that are usually unknown to the teachers. Based on those insights, differing issues such as collaboration, process writing and grading are re-evaluated.

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List of Abbreviations

MoHE Ministry of Higher Education

MOE Ministry of Education

DELL Department of English Language and Literature

ESL English as a Second Language

CAS College of Applied Science

FYP First Year Program

ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

NCTE National Council of Teaching of English

CSCL Computer Supported Collaborative Learning

ML Mobile Learning

SCT Sociocultural Theory

HE Higher Education

ICT Information Communications Technology

HTI Human Technological Interaction

L2 Second Language

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Chapter 1:
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis reports on a study which is concerned with young writers' views and texts when involved in writing for differing 'audiences' both inside and outside the classroom. It is particularly interested in shedding light on the role of differing audience types from the sociocultural view on writing. Taking this perspective into account when conducting an investigation is essential for understanding both composition and audience because both issues are part of daily acts of communication; writing fulfils the need of the writer but should also be relevant to the needs of an audience. This view of writing as a cultural act has been supported by the tendency towards including authentic materials in teaching (Duke *et al*., 2006; Purcell-Gates *et al*., 2007) through the use of texts written for real purposes, composing texts for real purposes, and fulfilling real purposes (to communicate messages for readers).

In order to approximate real writing experiences in ESL contexts, employing a genre-based approach to teaching writing is widely considered to address this and to foster the use of specific functional and linguistic language items. This is because the genre-based approach to teaching writing is rooted in social views of writing. To clarify, texts are perceived as socially located which can be represented through the use of stylistic linguistic items that have particular functions which are thus markers of a given genre (Paltridge *et al*., 2009; Swales, 2004). To write socially, it is imperative that ESL writers learn structures that convey meaning in particular contexts. Therefore, the focus on genre in ESL writing allows for meaningful writing acts.

In this way, the challenge is to involve a real audience in ESL writing contexts and disrupt the notion of audience as only a teacher or a peer, which can be easily achieved using current technologies in the twenty-first century. Nowadays the teaching of writing can be accomplished using technologies that have affordances such as speed, accessibility, variety of tasks and materials, specific tools for writing and for publication, and share-ability with a broader readership of text. Regarding audience, not only can an interested audience be found but also a variety of types – both synchronous and asynchronous – such

as virtual classmates, online groups, distant readers. Hence, technology enables a view of writing as a social act in ESL. Effective integration of technology to harness social affordances therefore seems to be desirable.

Nevertheless, to date there have been few attempts to study how student writers understand audience in relation to different types of genre and how technology might support this understanding. The role of technology in bringing different audience to ESL classrooms is yet to be clarified and understood in order to emphasise practices of writing as socially-located.

This study takes place in the Omani context and in order to set the scene for the study, the previous educational experiences that HE students will have had is outlined by focusing on English language learning in the national curriculum in Oman. The move into Higher Education will be explained and the challenges this poses in terms of supporting academic writing will be discussed. The institution in which this study takes place will be introduced, locating this particular educational context within the wider debates discussed here. The focus on audience, genres and technology will be discussed explaining why they each are pertinent for writing development and for the Omani context in particular.

1.2 English language use in the Sultanate of Oman

The value given to the English language was adopted as central to the development of the Sultanate of Oman after a renaissance when the Sultan of Oman, His Majesty Qaboos bin Said, came to the throne in 1970. The critical position that the English language assumed is emphasised by its use in differing sectors such as the economy, politics, legislation (Al-Issa, 2002), media, health (written and orally among medical staff), and education both as a subject at public education, and as the language of instruction in some bilingual schools. It is now the language that is used for communication in almost all sectors such as: tourism (including hotels), banking, and the private sectors. Public facilities use both Arabic and English signs and directions. Almost all Omani publishing and podcasting have part of their publications in English.

Despite this, Omanis rarely find communities in which to practise the English language outside of school-based opportunities, neither do employees need to use it in any of the previously mentioned governmental sectors, as they are mainly serving Omani nationals, with the majority of Omani employees working at the governmental sectors and only 13% of Omanis in the private sector, according to statistical release of 2015 data (NCSI, 2015). Thus with the majority of expatriates working in the private sector, the opportunity of continuing to use English is offered for only 13% of Omani employees. On the other hand, the domination of Arabic in the public sector has always meant that there is a need for learning the basics of oral Arabic language, especially within those planning to work for long periods in the country. Additionally, there are a number of foreign workers who come from Asian countries, who speak other languages and ultimately learn Arabic. Overall, there is a multi-lingual community in which the role of the English language is valued but needs to be balanced alongside the place of the indigenous language.

1.3 Mainstream Education in Oman

Education in the Sultanate of Oman has taken major leaps forward as have other sectors which have, overall, witnessed a breakthrough in the quality and quantity of their services (Al-Issa, 2002). Perhaps the major priority underlying all of these plans has been placed on educating the Omani people by offering free public education across the country. His Majesty has expressed many times in his speeches the importance of education and urged the Omanis to seize the available opportunities to educate themselves, as in one significant speech directed to the students of Sultan Qaboos University in 2000 urging the following:

> Since we assumed responsibility for this country, we have assigned a major priority to education – as well as other matters, of course – but education has been our major preoccupation. We pointed this out when we said we would teach our sons even under the shade of the trees (The royal speeches of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed, 2015).

Indeed, this speech signifies the start of the expansion of education and its provision publically since His Majesty held the reins of powers in the Sultanate in 1970. Before this era, education was available in Mosques, yet exclusively for religious, Arabic studies, and law education and thus only for those whose

potential career trajectories required such a focus. Education was provided in circle seating (where a group of students sit in a circle and their instructor sits in the middle). It was based on memorizing verses of the Holy Quran. Even with the existing Islamic education in the area, people travelled or sent their adult offspring to remote areas in Baghdad for philosophical religious education. However, in the early 70s Oman began to change after the discovery of oil; and new sources for economic diversity, leading to considerable changes in a short time. Thus, within a generation the country has changed from possessing limited infrastructure to the current situation with infrastructure for industry, transportation, and health. Similarly, education has moved from concentrating on a local agenda towards a more global set of expectations.

Within this background of rapid development, teaching has also changed dramatically in the last four decades. Teaching of English language has been part of schooling since the early stages of education, as early as 6 years old, in public education in the Sultanate of Oman. For private schooling this can sometimes start at an even earlier age. In addition, Omani children experience a range of different kinds of provision in terms of teaching English language which can vary according to public and private schools and urban and rural locations. The stages of education at public schools are Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and post-basic education; expected development is tracked across these three stages. English language is taught as a subject throughout all stages along with other subjects such as Islamic, Arabic, Mathematics, Science, and Cultural Studies. Science is further divided into physics, biology and chemistry at grade 9.

1.3.1 English language teaching in Cycle 1: Grades 1-4 (age 6- 9)

Pupils start with basic practice of alphabets and handwriting of letters and writing their names. They are expected, by the end of grade 4, to be able to hold their pens steadily and be able to write their names and a few memorized words. However, at this stage the focus is on acquiring linguistic lexemes rather than writing. Their exposure to the language is essentially through listening to songs, tape-recorded stories and the teacher.

1.3.2 English Language teaching in Cycle 2: Grades 5-10 (age 10-15)

The volume and amount of exposure is dramatically increased in Cycle 2, with a clear focus on producing sentences and practising grammatical structures. Traditional approaches are common – for example, teachers may frequently request that pupils copy sentences from the board. A dominant practice is that children are asked to memorise the spelling of new words and subsequently write them in short quizzes. By Grade 10, learners are expected to have enough exposure to the basic communicative repertoire of an estimated 4,500 lexemes (Ministry of Education, 2000). Additionally, students are expected to be able to write short descriptive paragraphs.

1.3.3 English Language Teaching in Post-basic education: Grades 11-12 (ages 16-17)

The range of courses taken becomes wider in the two final grades – 11 and 12 – to prepare students for their entrance to higher education. The different courses are organised into two basic streams: scientific or art. These are designed to prepare students in relation to mathematics, technology and critical thinking skills (Issan and Gomaa, 2010). For English, learners are expected to accumulate an additional 2,000-3,000 words, thus mastering around six to seven thousand words to be adequately prepared for their university level education (Ministry of Education, 2000). By the end of this stage students are expected to have a range of linguistic abilities and be able to write descriptions, short stories and anecdotes about themselves.

1.3.4 Teaching English in Higher Education Institutes

In a similar vein, Higher Education (HE) is dramatically changing and; additionally, has swiftly adapted to the new demands of continuous assessment. For instance, the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in the Sultanate of Oman, which is responsible for twenty-four private and six public colleges and universities, initiated an accreditation process for Majors in 2006, in order to strive for excellence in teaching and establish external monitoring of the varying public and private institutes. These institutes award mainly undergraduate Diplomas or Bachelor qualifications.

Additionally, most HE institutions convey their teaching through the medium of the English language, whilst placing considerable demands on students to adapt to this. Not only is academic change experienced, but this is also accompanied with dramatic changes in the environment of learning. As stated by AlSeyabi and Tuzlukova (2014:37) “transitional challenges of the Omani students include but are not limited to adjusting to new sociocultural and physical environment of learning (e.g., coeducation; multicultural teaching and academic community, etc.), new teaching methods and approaches (e.g., teacher-centred at school versus learner centred at the university)”. English Medium teaching in an EFL context is highly ambitious, but is also likely to generate ongoing challenges.

1.3.4.1 Foundation Year Program: transition stage

The Foundation Year Program (FYP) is considered as a mediatory stage in between school and university study that is designed and evaluated individually by each HE institute, although it does not lead to a credit or an award upon successful completion (MoHE and OAC, 2006). The rationale for its inception in HE came out of reform in higher education which aimed to bridge the path of the school graduates into their undergraduate study more smoothly. Attention was primarily aimed to ease transition towards using materials that are taught in English. At this stage, all instruction is conducted in English by mostly non-Omani staff who cannot use Arabic language to simplify the content. Thus considerable demands are placed upon staff and students alike.

The need for FYP is to be phased out gradually in alliance with the Strategic Plan for Education which is expected to be effective by 2020 (MoHE and OAC, 2006: 42). According to newly administered reforms in mainstream education (in 2010), students are expected to be better prepared for their HE; thus eliminating the need for the FYP. However, FYP is still currently considered as elemental crucial part of progress in the educational life of students. Standards for Foundation programs were designed by a board of senior Omani committee members from different HE institutes (Al-Mamari, 2012). Such standards include four basic areas that are based on the requirements of a broad undergraduate studies including: English language, mathematics, technology

and study skills. The possible range of performance on English language should be at least 5 with no less than 4.5 in each skill in IELTS exam (Al-Mamari, 2012). The continuing need for a FYP is indicative of a perception that there is a mismatch between the English language expectations of mainstream education and those of HE.

1.4 Context of the study: CAS

The current study is conducted in one of the public Colleges of Applied Sciences (CAS) in the Sultanate of Oman. CAS is affiliated to the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). Diagram 1.1 shows HE institutes in Oman ranging from public university (SQU), public colleges (i.e. Colleges of Applied Sciences, Technical Colleges), institutes, to training centres.

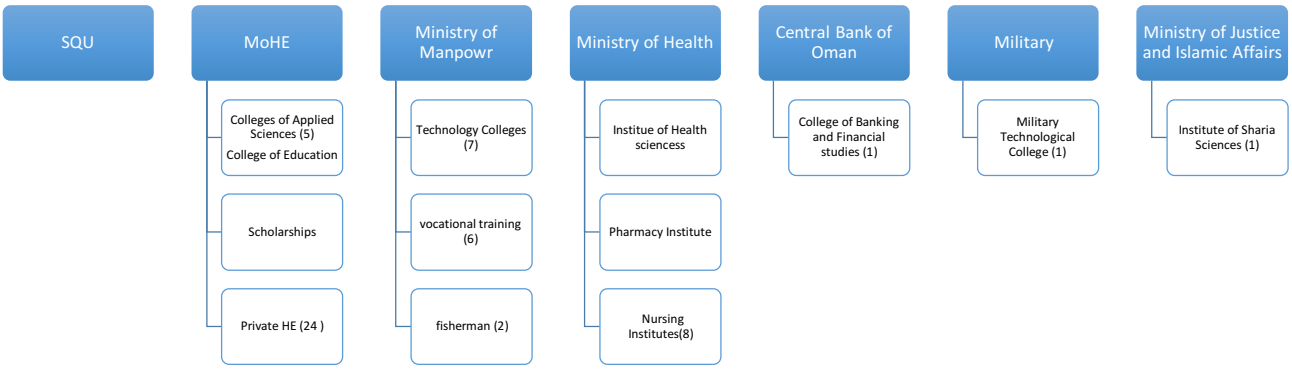


Figure 1.1: Higher Education institutes in Oman

Data in Figure 1.1 are collected from MoHE's admission centre (http://www.heac.gov.om). MoHE itself supervises about twenty-four private institutions and six public colleges distributed around main cities in the Sultanate of Oman. Of interest to the present study are CASs and their programmes.

CASs offer a range of diploma and Bachelor degrees in different majors: Engineering, Communications, International Business Administration (IBA), technology, and Designing. CASs also has subjects on teaching Foreign languages (Chinese, French, Germany). Only one college is an education college that trains teachers for mainstream schools in Mathematics, Chemistry,

Biology, and English. Each specialisation has its designated department that is responsible for teaching courses in each specialisation. Each department is composed of a Head (who liaises and supervises academics work) and academic staff. All departments of English language (DEL) used to offer an English language teacher program which was phased out in 2006 when all other colleges were transformed from Colleges of Education to Colleges of Applied Sciences. This transformation occurred in response to market demands. DEL continues its work in all colleges to teach FYP.

1.5 The problem of English language teaching in Oman

A frequently reported problem relates to the perceived inadequacy of performance for student graduates from mainstream Omani schools that led to recent reforms in 2010 (Al-Mahrooqi, 2012; Al-Mahrooqi *et al.,* 2016; Sergon, 2011). These reforms focus on the period prior to commencing study at pre-graduate level. However, the noted disparity in level can be associated to English language teaching being positioned differently within different institutional agendas and the links between these differing institutions – in terms of objectives and goals – rarely being made. In schools, English language is dealt with as a subject equal to other knowledge subjects, leaving little chance to think of English lessons as a space for practice because the curriculum introduces language skills in combination. This is because it adopts communicative language teaching whereby subskills are not given direct attention. Following this approach to teaching, students are exposed to texts, answer questions for comprehension, listen to parts related to topic of text, and then write. Therefore, linguistic elements, such as grammar and vocabulary, are assumed to be learned indirectly within the reading of texts and classroom discussions. Additionally, writing skills do not receive any direct attention where there is no process, product, or genre teaching. The change in higher education stems from the fact that English language is perceived as a means for communication not just a subject. Hence each subskill of the language (i.e. speaking, reading, writing, and listening) receives its focus by individual longer lessons. For instance, there are specific lessons for reading skills and its subskills. Moreover, there are individual lessons for grammar, and vocabulary.

Perhaps the most striking controversy stems from a lack of clarity in schools about the role of English language beyond the primary and secondary curriculum and the place of English within a global context. As students will need to use English at certain times in their higher education, their encounters and interaction with the range of contexts in which English will be used should be increased both formally and informally, whether graded or ungraded. There is insufficient provision for English language in public schools.

In its annual statistical records, the Ministry of Education (2016) has revealed the wide range of technology that is used as an educational tool such as: TV, smart boards, display devices, GPS and social media; yet the report was only on infrastructure and thus devoid of any real data related to procedures to address this new set of demands, or any training of staff/students. Thus, English language experience may be limited both by an inadequate preparation for the contexts in which English might be used, but also by a lack of preparation for the different media through which English will be used to both share and consume information and ideas. With this range of challenges in mind teaching is often left to the interpretation and speculation of individual teachers. This study aims to address this issue by focusing explicitly on different written forms, different possible audiences and contexts and different technological platforms.

1.5.1 Writing skills at CAS

Writing is undoubtedly a crucial skill in the academic life of scholars and for job placement. It is, however, addressed and developed mostly in the later grades of schooling or sometimes even later. Writing is a more demanding skill in language acquisition, being a productive skill, and it is therefore often developed later after exposure to the target language through reading or listening. Despite the expectations on school graduates, the students graduating from territory education (11-12 grades) were reported as failing to cope with the demands of their undergraduate study at college (Al-Mahrooqi 2012; Al-Mahrooqi *et al.,* 2016), which therefore required a bridging stage with an intensive focus on English skills.

Upon enrolment at CAS, the students attend a transitional two-year foundation program to prepare them for their Majors: Communication, Design, Applied Biotech, English language (teachers-trainee), Engineering, International Business Administration (IBA), Information Technology (IT) (MoHE, 2014). The foundation years are streamed into four levels: A (for the highest performing students), B, C, and D (for the lower performing students). To determine which program is appropriate for the students, each is required to sit a placement exam.

One of the main graduate attributes the Department of English Language and Literature (DELL) strives to achieve is "highly articulate individuals capable of communicating and presenting sound and well-structured arguments and ideas effectively in oral, visual and written forms for different purposes and context audience in English" (MoHE, 2014). This is focused on by teaching writing for eight hours per week (MoHE, 2005). Students are expected to achieve the attributes of reporting and writing academic texts of high quality. The objectives require the students to show evidence of written products that feature both high linguistic and presentational performance. The objectives also mention that students should be able to write texts in a coherent and cohesive manner (Al-Badwawi, 2011). Additionally, students should be able to produce varying text types and forms: express opinion, understand cause and effect, and construct helpful and accurate descriptions. This is achieved through a 'pattern-model-based writing' approach that involves focusing on the forms and functions of sentence within the essay by considering features such as hook, thesis statement, and topic sentence for example (Al-Seyabi and Tuzlukova, 2014). The students are also required to produce texts demonstrating high levels of judgement through "note-taking, review and revision of work, by paraphrasing, summarising, use of quotations and use of references" (MoHE, 2005) (see Appendix 1.1).

Focus on writing skills continues after the FYP through additional courses that are mainly directed at writing skills, or substantiated through integrating writing into disciplinary subjects. Al-Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014: 39) describe the teaching context in Oman as progressing from a focus on product and process

at earlier levels of English towards a genre approach for teaching those of higher levels of English involving 'contexts of the students' future specialized disciplines and academic requirements (e.g., technical reports in English for Engineers courses)."

Moreover, insufficient attention is being paid to developing academic skills such as synthesising, summarising, rephrasing, paraphrasing, and researching in the native language of the Omani students (Arabic). Teaching of writing skills in Arabic tends to focus on practising writing on general topics. Of importance to writing are prose, ideas, use of variety of linguistic expressions, correct punctuationn. Not only Omani ESL students have to learn new skills in English, they also have to learn new skills altogether – as these skills are not focused upon enough in Arabic writing either.

1.5.2 Writing through Technology in HE

Technology use has been advancing less rapidly due largely to the current national rationalisation of public spending, per Omani Ministry of Finance website. Digitised writing was recently adopted by the college departments including the Department of English Language (DEL) at CAS through the use of Google Classroom and Blackboard used for submitting assignments. Also, teachers were encouraged at the departmental level to use Google Classroom to interact with students and submit classroom materials. Another challenging issue about technology is that it is rarely accurately evaluated by its actual users: the learners.

The potential for integrating the teaching of writing with the use of technology in CAS has been explored in many studies due to the availability of infrastructure that predicts an increased use of technology in higher education. By and large, technology has received significant attention at the level of integration into teaching in Higher Education. For instance, a Moodle program has been implemented in Technical Colleges (Jose and Abidini, 2015), at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). The Moodle program facilitates 'graded readers' in "computer labs equipped with computer-assisted language learning (CALL) programs open for daily access. Additional support is also offered in the

Writing Centre and the Tutorial Centre, where students can make individual appointments to receive help with writing" (Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova, 2014: 40). Also, the WebCT program was used to teach some programs in Nizwa Teachers college with Sultan Qaboos University in 2003 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2009 and Al-Musawai, 2007). Additionally, on-line courses are offered at SQU (Al-Musawi, 2007). As for the present study, it will sit within a CAS institution to integrate technology into the teaching resources of the institution.

Only more recently have there been studies focused on the potential of social networks and online discussion in the Omani education (see for example Shamsabadi (2015) and Alkindi (2014)). These studies show an increased awareness of the role of technology in education. One of these recent studies looked at voice and construction of text within an Omani first year course (Shamsabadi, 2015) exploring the pattern of lexicon-grammatical features among Omani EFL learners. Another significant study was carried out in a similar context and investigated the potential use of ICT in EFL teaching (Alkindi, 2014). This study indicated that communication devices are widely available; yet their proper application in classrooms is still a major challenge. Also, it revealed some of the most practised uses of ICT in classrooms such as sharing information, posting assignments and discussion forums. Yet another study (Jose and Abidini, 2015) concluded that there was a relationship between use of a Moodle forum and an increased amount of linguistic variation in Omani students' texts. Perhaps, there is a need for more efforts to utilise online writing schemes, i.e. Facebook, Blogs, and Twitter, in teaching and enhancing writing. Therefore, opportunities to integrate technology in writing classrooms, in Oman, are certainly worth exploring. In the present study, the role of technology and deployment of blogs are indeed seen as central to envisioning future online writing classrooms.

1.5.3 Need for Genre Teaching in Oman HE

Use of technology must naturally be grounded in the most appropriate methodology for teaching and learning purposes. The need for genre teaching

of writing has often been highlighted as important in teaching specific functional linguistic items and the rhetorical and organizational features of any genre. This teaching is particularly important for ESL writers because they are specifically and explicitly provided with the language that is usually lacking. Among other studies, and to test the effectiveness of process genre writing, Samaranayake and Gabayno (2014) conducted a pilot scientific study to teaching context-specific materials at one Technology College in the Sultanate of Oman. The participants in the treatment group performed better than their peers in the final examination at the college, indicating that combining process and genre approaches of teaching writing can have a significant influence on performance. Though this study highlights the possible positive effects of process genre teaching, it is not clearly detailed how their peers in the 'control group' were taught writing during the semesters. When focusing on what aspects of genres exist in students' final year reports, Al-Husseini (2014) reveals that students attuned their texts to the major in which a report is written (i.e.: IT, Engineering, and Business). The students were also able to write effective reports because these reports were researched based on the needs of particular end-users, suggesting that the existence of a real audience is fundamental to the quality of the reports.

Within the wider debates of locating the genre approach in the Sultanate of Oman HE, there is still little evidence to indicate the value of the use of technology to support the teaching of genres. Research is especially sparse in examining the potential of technology in disrupting and expanding perceptions of 'audience' in classroom practice. Changes to this concept of audience can be challenging in ESL writing where there tends to be an academic-specific classroom context. Writing in these contexts can be simulated and artificial and far removed from the reality of the writer. In Shamsabadis's (2016) study, through analysis of two blogs, she indicated construction of social relationship was weak and interaction with audience was not visible. This raises the question of why ESL students fail to address audience in their texts in their approaches to writing. The present study will tackle the nature of the relationship between a writer and an audience in three different genres: writing diary, academic essay, and blogs in order to compare formal and non-formal

modes of writing. A comparison of these three genres in one study has, to my knowledge, not yet been explored.

1.6 Contribution of the Study

This study adds value to the understanding of audience as culturally positioned and as a dynamic concept that is defined by the specifics of the context. In this sense, the study gives an interpretation of audience as personally constructed yet also influenced by teaching factors such as the teacher, technology, learning materials, and peers. It also aspires to provide pedagogical implications in line with insights from sociocultural, linguistic and cognitive theories of writing. In this way, any difficulties faced are explored and pedagogical solutions are subsequently discussed.

Therefore, the main question that this study intends to explore centres around the perception and understanding of 'audience', as a concept and a practical task requirement, when constructing a text. To make views of 'audience' as clear as possible and to be able to draw clear pedagogical implications in relation to the reality of audience, three different genres are considered as likely to present a different understanding of audience: diary texts, blog texts, and academic texts.

1.7 Thesis Outline

The thesis is organized around seven main chapters: literature review, methodology, three findings chapters and discussion. The **literature review chapter** presents fundamental issues related to thinking of writing and approaches to teaching it in an L2 context. Important issues related to technology implementation are also presented. Following this, the **methodology chapter** presents the philosophical orientation of investigating thinking about teaching audience through different genres on selecting methodology, methods of investigation, sample and sampling, and instruments. Additionally, particular attention is given to ethics taken while conducting research. Subsequently, the **findings chapters** are organized around themes emerging from data analysis. Finally, the **discussion chapter** highlights

emerging issues relating to writer-reader interaction in the text and their impact on teaching and selection of teaching materials.

Chapter 2:
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to outline the theoretical framework within which writing, and the teaching of writing is currently approached. It is tempting to think of writing as simply mastery of a linguistic repertoire and as concerned with learning to handle the demands and characteristics of the text. However, within the fields of psychology, social psychology and sociology, writing research has been as much concerned with the writer and the context of writing as with the text itself. In contrast, cognitive approaches view writing as a mental process and have constructed models of the writing process based on the practices of expert writers (as works of Flower and Hayes, 1981; and subsequent works of Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). Cognitive approaches to writing focus on processes such as attention, consciousness, memory, and recall. These views have been contested by more recent views of writing based on sociocultural theories. From this perspective, it is argued that, writing should be seen as a socially-situated activity whereby texts are emergent and dynamic being re-created and co-constructed as a result of an interaction between the individual and the learning context. Thus this approach reflects Vygotsky's views of learning as a socially mediated activity and development as dependent on social observation and social participation as a pre-stage for 'mediating' mental learning.

Each view offers a valuable perspective regarding the pedagogy of L2 teaching of writing. Therefore, this section offers an attempt to understand concepts on the basis of each theoretical tradition, see Figure 2.1. The theoretical frameworks presented in the first section of this chapter include linguistic, socio-cultural, and cognitive theories. They are linked to debates on teaching writing skills for speakers of English as an additional or foreign language. However, firstly it will be important to trace the historical background of these theories to gain a clearer understanding of their origins.

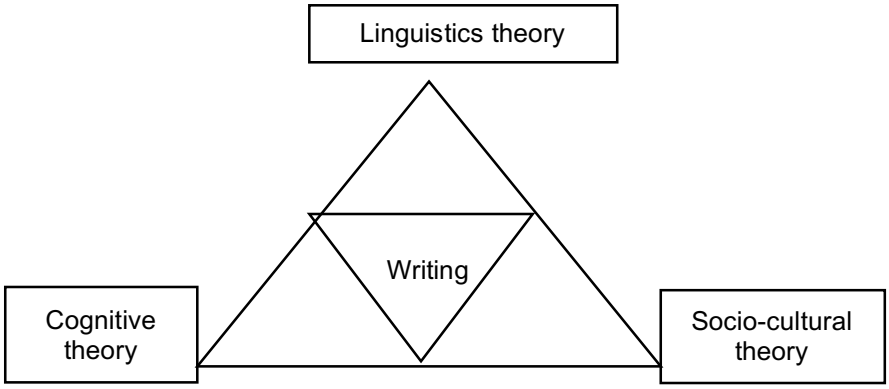


Figure 2.1: Writing in Theories of Language

2.2 Writing in Theories of Language

2.2.1 Linguistics Theories

The first theory that writing draws on is linguistics theory. Linguistics theory can be classified into three main groups: general linguistics, comparative linguistics and particular linguistics (Meader, 1904). The three schools of study each have a different focus on languages. Firstly, **general linguistics**, or general grammar or linguistics science or linguistics, handles the nature of language and its progress. Language is widely studied in its oral and written forms. Language is treated as a form of communication among other forms. It is investigated in relation to the different sub-forms of expression with focus on each aspect language such as: phonology, morphology, syntax rhetoric, pragmatics and stylistics. Its main aim is to generate general laws. Therefore, aspects of language are dealt with as if universal. The second group of study is **comparative linguistics** which is far narrower than general linguistics. It explores a single family or related languages in a family such as the Semitic family. Its main aim is to reveal similarities and differences between the studied languages by deeply investigating individual areas and interpreting them. Thirdly, the field of **particular linguistics,** which is the narrowest, relates to the study of one language dialect or a group of dialects. It concerns studying the developmental origin of particular linguistic units since the language started as distinctive from other languages in the same family in a historical analysis of its evolution. It aims to understand particular events of language.

Transformational Generative language

One of the most influential theories of linguistics is Chomsky's transformational generative theory (1965) (Higginbotham, 1982; Langendoen, 1998; Silverstein, 1972). Chomsky's basic perspectives of mind and behaviour led him to distinguish between two elements of learning: competence and performance. He used the term competence to refer to knowing language and the term performance or verbal behaviour to mean actual behaviour and disposition in practice (Higginbotham, 1982). As such, humans have a system of how language works in their mind; though this was contested by Higginbotham arguing that it can be misleading: having a competence or skill may not always guarantee that the person can perform it in practice. Reversely, the term performance implies that excelling in a particular skill can suggest being competent in this skill. Use of language is explained as the mind being creative and innovative. Consequently, use of language is stimulus-free and consciously formulated (Anderson, 2008). So meaning making occurs through interaction within linguistic structures. For an expression to be meaningful, different parts of language (phonology, lexicon, semantics, syntax) interact with each other to make utterances or sentences.

Most of the work on sentence structuring involves explaining the relationship between constituents and rules on structuring. For instance, a sentence is explained by its derivation, i.e., syntactic components called phrase structure (Longedoen, 1998). Phrase structure is at the top of the hierarchy of the components of the sentence (Longedoen, 1998). Moreover, phrase structure follows grammatical order that is used for recursion in grammar, i.e. repeated use of structure to form other similar structures (Longedoen, 1998) which is represented more commonly in tree diagrams (Silverstein, 1972). The analysis of the sentence structure led to formulating general rules about different types, divided into deep structure and surface structure (Longedoen, 1988; Silverstein, 1972). Chomsky indicated that meaning is indirectly related to expression through deep structure. To be able to understand and extract meaning from a sentence implies an ability to recover the deep structure (Longedoen, 1998). As such, two sentences might be structured differently at the level of surface structure but they have the same meaning – which is the deep structure. Additionally, language consists of "base component" and "local

transformations". Base component is composed of rules that categorise language structures to form, while local transformations are used to mark lexical units of the language. Moreover, the different lexical categories have restrictions on where they occur.

The application of linguistics into the practice of teaching writing in an L2 context has had its proponents. These proponents clarify what a user of a language should possess or acquire as part of communication by giving importance to entities such as: lexemes, grammatical connection in sentences, parts of speech/written words, coherence and cohesion. Some of the pedagogical implications are teaching sentence combining and genre teaching (Hancock, 2009). This means developing consciousness about the accuracy of language to practise building a complex sentence out of a simple one. Another application of linguistics into teaching is based on the functional use of forms within a particular context, resulting in a deepened understanding of grammar with a focus on a variety of forms of writing. A genre-based approach to the teaching of writing is indeed highly applicable, as will be highlighted in the next section. Additionally, knowledge produced by sub-linguistic fields such as pragmatics is thought to deepen teachers' knowledge about language. This can be valuable as it better enables teachers to discuss differing uses of expressions with their students (Meng, 2009).

Nonetheless, it can be argued that the role of linguistics theory in teaching is overrated in respect to some areas. For one thing, the role of universal grammar refers to a completely abstract notion (Thompson, 1991) that cannot apply to 2nd language users. Such a notion is objected to by Bourdieu in the sense that language users have the capacity to produce expressions for a situation, rather than generating unlimited production (Thompson, 1991). Where universal grammar is mentally constructed/created, it cannot explain 2nd language development and use.

Regarding grammar teaching and its effect on L1 writing, the EPPI review 2004 (Andrews, 2005) concluded that teaching sentence combining led to improvements in writing quality and accuracy. Yet, the teaching of formal

sentence grammar was not that effective according to the same review. This concern is crucial to ESL contexts where teaching receptive skills (listening and reading) goes in parallel with productive skills (writing and speaking). Nonetheless, it is widely accepted in ESL teaching that in order to effectively notice and make subsequent use of the sentence grammar, some teaching of it is required. This is in contrast to L1 settings where grammar is often learned implicitly rather than explicitly and procedurally rather than declaratively.

Debates about teaching grammar in ESL contexts are deepened by its uncertain position in the 1st language context. According to a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the national curriculum in the UK has recently reintroduced formal grammar teaching and now requires the teaching of linguistics and grammar (University College of London website) – in an attempt to give grounds to calls from traditional commentators who argue for the importance of this aspect – and for the need to become proficient in language. The position in the UK remains contested however, especially since the introduction of a grammar test for 11 year olds which not only tends to prioritise 'grammatical form' over 'grammatical function' but also tends to lead to decontextualised grammar teaching, resulting in continued professional disquiet about the value of grammar. In the same vein, in a large UK-based project that included 744 students and and 31 schools, Myhill *et al*. (2011) provide evidence-based claims for the positive influence of grammar teaching on performance in writing, particularly for the more able writers. Conversely, explicit grammar teaching seems to be largely avoided in the USA. Through The National Council of Teaching of English (NCTE) resolution (1998-2017), it was decided that the teaching of grammar should be abandoned at all levels and henceforth writing is taught through 'meaningful' tasks.

This inconsistency of viewing English grammar and linguistic elements as important or not can also be influential in ESL contexts where learners have to be introduced to language elements before they start producing them orally or in writing. In this context a focus on form-teaching, sentence combining, structure teaching and error correction remain vehemently defended by many in the L2 field (Ellis, 2002; Russell & Spada, 2006; Ur, 1999). Nonetheless, an

opposing view has also gained momentum, which called for the abandonment of a focus on accuracy in favour of meaningful writing tasks (Truscott, 1996; Nguyen, 2015). The latter view has been further reinforced by affordances of technology.

2.2.2 Cognitive Theory

Psychology considers cognition to be a "process, by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered and used" (Neisser and Cliffs, 1967: 7). Cognitive processes depend on humans' senses as the mediator or receptor of information. These data are reused or retained in the mind through different mental processes. Moreover, Neisser and Cliffs argue that mental processes extend to every activity humans do in their lives. Greeno *et al.* (1992) go on to argue that learning in cognitive psychology involves growth in conceptual knowledge, general cognitive abilities, and metacognitive abilities. As such, development and growth can be seen through the structuring of information into symbols which are manifested through the use of skills. There are different mental processes which are necessary in order to build and use these skills: attention, memory, perception, language, data categorisation (grouping), solving problems (Greeno *et. al.*, 1992; Neisser and Cliffs, 1967).

Cognitive theory has been used in the field of teaching and learning, including second language learning. Cognitive approaches to teaching can be identified by certain elements. Firstly, it is an individual perspective on teaching and learning, rather than a social one (Firth and Wagner, 1997). Every learner is considered to process learning input cognitively until development happens and learning input becomes automatic in the behaviour of the learner. A related feature is that learners are considered active agents (Hyland, 2003) because they process their own learning. Thirdly, the application of grammar knowledge is treated as a mental process (Firth and Wagner, 1997).

In relation to teaching writing skills, the seminal work of Flower and Hayes (1980 & 1981) set the foundation for a cognitive theory of the writing process. Based on this view, many studies – depending on methods such as the case study and think-aloud protocol – have revealed that the processes of writing are

far from simple. A seminal influence is Flower and Hayes' model (1981) that highlighted the role of the task environment and the composers' long-term memory in composition. They introduced a model of cognitive theory that is based on three basic principles. The first principle is that writing involves many processes that are distinct and interact with each other recursively such as planning, structuring, editing and evaluating. Secondly, a writing task involves making goals about the rhetorical task that depends on the long term memory of the writer; namely, knowledge about topic, audience, exigency and planning. Thirdly, experienced writers follow different processes of writing from novice ones. Their work forms the basis of the process approach, which is currently followed in teaching writing (see section 2.1.2). Realisation of the mental process of writing into stages led to a distinction between the performance of expert and novice writers as proposed in Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) models. They characterised two models: the knowledge telling model and knowledge transformation model. In the first one, the novice writer depends on knowledge stored in the long-term memory to complete the rhetorical task; a characteristic of this pattern of writing is the chaining of ideas drawn from long-term memory such that one idea simply prompts the next. Knowledge transformation on the other hand assumes a more expert writer who responds to the rhetorical task by depending on their knowledge to set goals, evaluate content, and modify the text. Thus they can shape their ideas in line with their own rhetorical purposes.

The critique of the role of applied cognitive knowledge mostly stems from the sociocultural views of learning, which view writing as socially situated and thus challenges the focus on writing as simply an individual problem-solving activity. Cognitive and sociocultural views should not be viewed as separate in advancing an understanding about writing and development because each one considers the role of mental process as important and seek to understand how writers develop writing ability. Nonetheless, they are termed differently, as is explained next in 2.2.3. While cognitive theory sees the act as located in the cognitive abilities and focuses on staging the process to improve the quality of text, sociocultural theory sees the act as located within a social context. In addition, both consider independent learning as personalised and thus focus

on growth of ‘individuality’ or ‘identity’: while cognitive theory sees this as a consequence of cognitive ability, the sociocultural theory sees it as shaped by the context.

2.2.3 Sociocultural Theories

Sociocultural theory emerged from psychological and sociological views of development and learning within a social framework: whether in community, inside homes, at educational or business contexts. It originated from the thought-provoking work of the Russian philosopher Vygotsky who has been most influential in social psychology for offering an understanding of how learning is always mediated by both language and interaction with others. Various versions of sociocultural theories exist including Vygotskian sociocultural theory, language socialisation theory, learning in situated practices theory, dialogic theory (Bakhtin), and Critical Theory (Zuengler and Miller, 2006). These theories share their focus on the role of the community to support and shape learning and development. This includes shaping understanding of what kind of writing is valued and approved and; conversely, what kind of writing might be seen as less important (i.e. writing a story is ‘better’ than writing a shopping list even though the second of these might be more useful). Of prominence to composition are thoughts invoked by Vygotsky’s theory which explain important perspectives that are usually drawn on in the classroom – the interrelationship between learner-learner and teacher-learner. Another influential sociocultural-based theory is Bakhtin’s dialogism, which provides critical insights into the understanding of talk to support writing. In the forthcoming sections, each of the aforementioned sociocultural theories will be outlined. While mindful of the linguistic and cognitive aspects of writing, this study principally adopts a socio-cultural perspective because the aim is to understand the context in which writing is practised and understood.

2.2.3.1 How Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory informs Collaboration in classroom

The original terms of sociocultural theory used in most of Vygotsky writings are cultural psychology or cultural-historical theory. The term ‘sociocultural’ was in fact coined by Wertsch in 1985 (Lantolf and Beckett, 2009). Thorne (2005)

described the development of this theory as progressive and cumulative. Vygotsky's book Mind in Society (1978) marked a departure from prevailing behaviouristic theories and sparked numerous further works on the social dimension of learning and knowing (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007; Stahl, 2013). Viewing the human mind as fluid, dynamic and uncontained, Vygotsky also marked a new vision of the effect of the social forces and cultural advancement on human thinking capabilities such as: perception, memory, and problem-solving attention (Stahl, 2013).

In sociocultural theory (henceforth SCT), there are two main tenets of human mind development; firstly, lower-level neurobiological base and; secondly, higher level cultural tools (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007). A person has a mind: a system of neurons that enables thought, which relates to the theory of cognitivism. For the mind to construct knowledge, the cultural tools (thinking, logic, perception, language) mediate such growth. Such higher-level tools are culturally situated and conditioned in the community in which a person lives and thus encultured. Additionally, such tools mediate between a person and the surrounding world; a process that controls what a person receives and through which that person interacts with the world. As such, it allows for learning and development within a social framework. Because of this, learning experiences expand and increase through time by an accumulation of knowledge allowing a learner to become increasingly proficient. In that sense, a person can be bilingual or multilingual. This kind of development is thought to happen through a process of 'mediation'.

Mediation is a construct that explains how learning happens through socialisation. Everything surrounding humans in the social context has the possibility of being internalised or learned. As such, mediation is a mental process of acquiring new developmental behaviours (or habits, or knowledge) by means of an external stimulus (Stahl, 2013). Language, for instance, is a social artefact that can be mentally processed and learned through existing stimuli (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007). This explains how languages are learned, depending on the way they are used, in the social context the person grows up in. This explains not only the dialectical differences, but also the differences

within one dialect of a language and another, and the differences in language between different generations.

The process of mediation accounts for many developmental processes in life. For instance, every cultural or social activity is often learned this way such as using phones, speaking jargon, playing music, dancing and drawing. These activities have different functional roles (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007). They serve as connectives between humans and the world. Moreover, these artefacts are auxiliary tools to control/use the biological activities in a purposeful and deliberate way; for this they are controllable by the human mind. Furthermore, they enable humans to respond to different stimulus thoughtfully and carefully by planning out and pre-thinking about the possible risks of different actions; for this language and logic play a role. Making a plan, in fact, entails various cultural tools such as: mind-set, memory, perception, logic, language and technology.

Although the concept of mediation has prominence in advancing ideas of development, there are certainly issues that cannot fit within this framework. Its assumption is based on context informing the individual in order for the mind to internalise certain artefacts. There are, on the other hand, emerging concepts and artefacts from the mind that help illuminate the political contextual community. Creativity or giftedness, for instance, cannot always be directly attributed to the influence of the context.

One form of mediation is regulation (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007). This relates to the level of control and power any entity has on another entity/subject. Considering lexemes (words and concepts) as an example, they are regulated by the societal and cultural context in which they exist. In fact, learning a language involves both the action/object to which a term refers and its contextual meaning. Lantolf and Thorne (2007) list three types of regulation: object-regulation, other-regulation and self-regulation. The first type, object-regulation, is the control of an object over a person/learner. When an external object attracts the attention of the learner due to its external features, the learner is object-regulated. The second type of regulation, other-regulation,

means relying on outer objects to support a mental activity such as conducting a simple mathematical addition for young children through showing them visual aids such as blocks, or counting on fingers. This need for external support to accomplish the task is termed scaffolding (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007). The third type of developmental regulation is self-regulation which requires minimal or no external support to complete a task. It is characterised by the internalisation of a skill or behaviour (Lantolf and Beckett, 2009). It seems that development or learning, as explained through three stages, explains the importance of direct exposure to the object to be learned. Additionally, it relies heavily on learners' senses such as sight, touch, and hearing. Also, it does not assume learning happens individually.

A second construct of SCT is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). It is a property related to learning, development, or change in behaviour. ZPD signifies a gap between what learners exhibit individually as knowledge and what they can do when working with a more knowledgeable partner or a teacher (Stahl, 2013). Vygotsky argues that collaborative learning in a social context presupposes individual learning because the group represents a range of different levels of knowledge which is then supported by a mediator; for instance, a skilled peer, mentor, or a particular learning aid (Stahl, 2013). Group learning could be a strength for teaching because each individual may be more skilful (in a particular trait) which can be further activated by the mediator or can lead to learning material through participation in the actual process.

Finally, SCT is increasingly cited in the field of teaching and second language acquisition. In fact, it represents a way of perceiving teaching as embedded in the social context, which is markedly different from behaviourism – an approach that assumes a one-way learning process. In contrast a socio-cultural approach prioritises teaching based on the premises of interaction, scaffolding, socialisation leading to internalisation. Blind mimicking of actions and chunks of structures is no longer seen as effective. For conscious learning from others (Lantolf and Beckett, 2009), observation and participation in production are required. Development is thought of as a result of exposure to socially-embedded materials or actions (Johnson, 2006), whilst traditional class

dynamics based on the direct delivery of content are dismissed. As such, teachers are no longer the sole material holder. In fact, teacher becomes part of the classroom community where development is augmented through engagement with others.

The value of sociocultural theory lies in its ability to explain the conditions for learning in a natural context that cognitive theories overlook. By doing so, though learning occurs in the mind, it explains the tools and steps for it to occur such as mediation and scaffolding. In this vein, writing tasks are seen as participatory tasks where collaborative efforts can enable students to gain new skills, linguistic items, or rhetorical understanding. There is evidence on the effective role of both teachers and peer support on writing. For instance, Wigglesworth and Storch (2012) provide evidence of the role of collaboration and written feedback on texts that led to different engagement with the task and potentially improved the quality of texts. Similarly, de la Colina and García Mayo (2007) indicated that low-proficient students recognized gaps in their knowledge and were able to propose correct language forms and use them when introduced to cloze tasks in group work. This study indicated that the designed tasks effectively drew the attention of the learners to gaps in their individual knowledge resulting in knowledge building. Additionally, the accuracy of a text as a product can improve when it is written by a collaborative group rather than individuals alone, as was seen in Dobao's study (2012).

However, the dynamics of collaboration have to be deliberately created and designed as they are often not part of natural groupings in the classroom. The role of each group participant is structured unequally which is explained by Vygotsky's concept of mediation. To address this challenge, Donato (2004) highlights a possible model that is underpinned by research into group dynamics: socialising with each other, having a clear position or role to feed into the group, and having sharable information. This creates interdependency in order to complete texts. As such, this can lead to building teams who work together through interpersonal relationships and organised missions, clear tasks and socialising with others. However, it is not enough to have information to be shared with others, but also that conversation should be 'reciprocal' and

meaning should be negotiated (Geekie *et al*., 2004). Thus, communicating information depends on the ability of the interlocutors to ask for clarification and provide clear explanations. Additionally, having a specific role to fulfil in a group does not guarantee that the role will be administered successfully. Here, Geekie *et al.* (2004) emphasise the concept of the 'quality of collaboration', which includes either a more skilful peer or teacher. Without this, successful learning is unlikely to occur.

Informed by the socio-cultural perspective, the present study places an emphasis on collaborative approaches in the writing classroom. In particular, it focuses on the way the teacher sets up collaboration inside classroom and the role is given to technology to set up collaborative groupings. Moreover, the current study places emphasis on the possible effectiveness of collaborative efforts on the process of writing and rhetorical tasks such as ideas generation, organisation, vocabulary choice and writing up of texts.

2.2.3.2 Bakhtin's theory of Dialogism

In rather a different approach towards learning and socialisation, the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin tackles relationships existing between oneself with others or with culture, and between cultures (Kostogriz, 2005). There is an internal dialogue in every encounter with others in that it involves words/utterances with a unique encoded message. The utterances of the speaker (initiator of words) are thought to have an inherent addressivity in their nature. As Bakhtin (1986: 69) explains, "the speaker talks with an expectation of a response, agreement, sympathy, objection, execution, and so forth (with various speech genres presupposing various integral orientations and speech plans on the part of speakers or writers)". In this sense, any kind of utterance is thought to trigger in the reader or hearer a level of response. This happens because – essentially – words in themselves are encrypted with a level of evaluative accents within the meaning so that when used, they carry evaluative meaning. And language incorporates signs (single words/utterances) that are mixed with the views and beliefs of the user, i.e. ideologies or Bakhtin's term heteroglossia. Such interlocution acts convey particular meanings which are sensed through evaluative accents. He argues that individual words in a

dictionary are only descriptive, and neutral; however, when used, they become contextual and individual specific. The meaning thus is intentional to the user. Such wording stance explains the unique system of language use that each individual has.

In this way, dialogism signifies that speech does not stem from nowhere and thus does not happen randomly. In fact, it is organised and planned to convey particular effects that occur in chains unstoppably. For the meaning to continue to have its effect, there must be a level of reasoning of speaking in a particular form/way which is related previous or expected utterances. Such addressivity can explain intentions and messages in real life communications.

2.2.3.3 Bakhtin's view of Voice in Language

A related issue to the understanding of language is its identity and its cultural position. This notion is explained through Bakhtin's view of all languages as 'multi-languaged', termed heteroglossia; and 'multi-voiced', termed as polyphony. The emergence of this concept resulted from his analysis of Dostoevsky's novels (Zhongwen, 1997). Multi-voicedness in literary works shows when more than one view of the world appears in a text. As such, for a literary work to represent reality, an author "must manage to depict his characters with objectivity and consequently, he must strengthen their subjectivity all the more" (Zhongwen, 1997: 780). Bakhtin (1981) explains that languages carries collective voices that are specific to particular age groups/classes, era, or location. For that reason, multi-voicedness can occur when "my utterance conveys other voices though they are not mine" (p.294), by using other dialect/voice that is not the user's. As such, voices are characterised within a social community. Bakhtin (1986: 63) continues that "various genres can reveal various layers and facets of the individual personality and individual style can be found in various interrelations with the national language." This means that personality aspects are impeded in the literary style of the writer.

The relevance of Bakhtin's ideas about dialogism for the present study is that the voice of learners needs its own emphasis when researching writing.

Bakhtin's views help us to understanding how learners think of themselves as writers in context and how they make choices about what they do in the text. If a text is viewed as containing styles, interactions, and personality, then analysis of texts can show different levels of interaction. This will be subsequently detailed in the description of the textual analysis in the methodology chapter.

Having presented the various theories that inform an understanding of writing practices, it is now important to consider their a priori implications inasmuch as they are relevant to the present study. The complication of teaching writing in second language contexts is that it has to draw on differing theories to understand writing practices and in particular those derived within the L1 setting. Writing in English or Arabic may bear linguistic and sociocultural differences, yet cognitively it may be a similar process. However, aspects related to writing practices may be, by and large, encultured geographically, especially with the distant historical origin of English and Arabic.

2.2.4 Theories of language learning that inform writing in L2

Writing in a second language is presumed to rely on skills acquired when writing in L1. Though writing in English as L2 and the field of second language acquisition (SLA) have had distinct agendas and are described as different fields in the sense that L2 writing is performance-based; SLA explains the development of an additional language (Carson, 2001; Ortega, 2012), the two areas can meet at certain points because writing in L2 draws on both L1 and L2. Therefore, knowledge availed by SLA can largely contribute to L2 writing. The interlink between L1 and L2 is particularly important for the current study because both are seen to support L2 writing.

Drawing on the three theories – linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural theories – that are largely discussed in relationship with L1, it can be said that understanding both L1 and L2 writing development requires knowledge availed by the three theories. Indeed, though contested there is evidence that L1 affects the learning of L2 in a particular way (Kim *et al*., 2017). Similarly, a correlation has been demonstrated between fluency in L1 writing and L2 writing regardless of other factors such as metacognitive awareness and L2 linguistic knowledge

(Schoonen *et al*., 2003). In a study conducted by Wang and Wen (2002) utilizing a think-aloud protocol while writing two tasks: narration and argumentation, they concluded that the students used their L1 and L2 to think about the process of writing, ideas generation and organization, task requirement, and writing text. This is not surprising as L1 is more developed than L2. At the subconscious level of the writing process, the use of L1 is likely to occur especially for low level writers when mental processes are assumed to be more easily completed by the use of L1. Perhaps what is surprising is the use of L2 to engage in quite complex cognitive processes.

In terms of the linguistic influence of L1 on L2, there are issues relevant to the transfer of linguistic structures between languages or the interference of mother language (i.e. L1). Krashen (1983) attributes the reliance on old knowledge (L1) as due to having to produce content (in speaking or in writing) when a user lacks the target repertoire in L2. In this vein, Marzban's (2016) study indicates a correlation between an ability to perform well (achieve high) in L1 (Persian) writing and an ability to perform well in L2 (English) writing tasks. However, this ability was found effective when students' L2 proficiency is high, whereas low-performing writers struggled in L2 writing. This might lead to an assumption that if L2 is supported by a stronger L1 facility; then one cannot develop L2 without continuing to support L1.

In relation to SCTs, there is barely enough suggestive evidence on the role of the different contexts that compares the status of writing in a native language with that in a non-native one. However, there is an approximation for that through calls for exposure to authentic texts and performing in conditions similar to native writers: for instance, writing for real audience or wanting to interact with others in written texts (see sections 2.3 and 2.4 for further details). In line with this, the present study aims to draw on ideas about collaborative learning in the context of the L2 writing classroom but also to consider the role of technology as a collaborative medium for the L2 writer.

2.3 Writing in Theories of Technology

2.3.1 Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL)

In the twenty-first century, it is impossible to consider writing without taking account of the impact of technology. A useful pedagogical application of theories of learning comes through Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) theory which explains students' collaborative acts while using computer devices (Stahl *et al*., 2006). CSCL, according to Koschmann (2002: 17), "is a field of study centrally concerned with meaning and the practices of meaning making in the context of joint activity, and the ways in which these practices are mediated through designed artefacts." Learning can be observed and studied in its context by the aid of computers. However, the role of software applications and electronic devices is secondary, and socialisation is foregrounded (Stahl *et al*., 2006). Software provides a base for interaction and support for pedagogical activities. In doing so, it alters traditional organisation of group work and sharing of information.

Teaching writing through CSCL draws theoretically on both cognitive and social perspectives of learning and development (Stahl, 2013). In terms of cognitive views, collaboration studies have mental processes at the core of building behaviours the individual manifest when engaged in group work. These mental processes are constructivist in nature in that learning is considered constructing different realities and identities. Additionally, they are socially oriented because of the wider context, in which individuals live and interact, which is acknowledged as an important factor.

An application towards CSCL in the classroom is mobile learning (ML) which mobilises classroom dynamics. ML is recognised as either an extension for mobile phones or as indication of the location of the user of this technological device (Kakihara and Sorensen, 2002; Kukulska-Hume, 2009; Traxler, 2009). Yet, relating mobile to learning is not that simple and straightforward. Learning in any educational system is about achieving particular learning aims which has to be at the heart of ML. Harris and Hofer (2009: 23) state that they "think of it as a grounded approach to technology integration". As such they propose learning needs of students as the starting point for designing and understanding an ML project. Thus, it is critical to think about effective integration schemes that suit the differing learning systems and respond to the latest theories of

teaching. For the purpose of this study, ML is perceived as a combination of what the mobile devices can offer for varying educational contexts in order to effectively achieve their educational aims. This involves any possible deployment of suitable affordance of the electronic tool (Milrad, 2003; Stone, 2004) to achieve the learning goals of each class.

The potential of the use of mobile phone in teaching writing relates to the creation of learning spaces where additional learning opportunities are facilitated. Mobile phones have educational affordances to extend learning beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Indeed, an essential affordance is the quick and easy access to resources in different locations (Wishart, 2009), bringing materials closer to the learners. Mobile phones have countless educational applications that allow the learners to independently play with them to develop various personal skills. Moreover, learning is no longer merely equivalent to attendance in the teaching context. This is mediated by mobility affordance of the phone. As such, learners are not confined to a table and chair to interact with teaching materials because all that they need is in their personal devices (Kearney *et al*., 2012). This allows for a richness of teaching materials and personalisation of learning as learners are able to choose and perhaps combine both experiences to maximise their learning. Additionally, phones mediate social interactivity (Kearney *et al*., 2012). In fact, they allow for varying social interaction experiences, perhaps linking to discussion groups that are globally available by use of, for instance, blogs.

Nonetheless, a major concern with CSCL is technology integration, as it signals the success or impediment of affordances. One important consideration is readiness of the institution. To stand on some issues, previous studies have signalled many pitfalls to be cautious of. Rogers (1999) reported difficulties of integrating technology in teaching based on interviews with 28 college and university teachers in Minnesota. Financial and professional requisites were the top issues reported. Firstly, it was found that there was no allocation of funds to provide the technology needed, which includes software, hardware and connectivity such as Wi-Fi. What makes it considerably challenging is the continuous technological revolutions, making it imperative to replace out-of-

date devices, and update new software programs for protection against viruses that attack technological devices. Secondly, designing applications suitable for educational aims is not cost-free. Thirdly, it was found that there was an inadequate transfer of professional knowledge and inadequate sharing of best practices among teachers (Chizmar and Williams, 2001; Rogers, 1999). This indicates a real need for specialized personnel in technology. Although these problems were identified in early 2000, they still apply nowadays –particularly in the ESL contexts.

Another related concern to professionality is willingness to use technology. According to Butler and Sellbom (2002), educators reported uncertainty as to whether technology can in fact offer solutions to educational issues. It seems that integrating ICT in conventional teaching might be perceived by some as a burden, requiring additional time on the teachers' part, with them being paid either to become acquainted with what technology offers or to learn how these affordances can best be utilized in the classroom. Finally, teachers were reported as failing to cope with technology integration in the classroom (Chizmar and Williams, 2001; Rogers, 1999). The process is made even more challenging due to the continuous innovations in technology. New technological devices that connect communities rather differently than was done a few decades ago keep emerging. It is a shame having to acknowledge that sometimes students nowadays may be becoming more knowledgeable about technology than their teachers, as asserted by Pettit and Kukulska-Hume (2009).

However, CSCL signals a potential use of technology for teaching ESL writing collaboratively. A wide range of cloud-based applications exist for collaborative writing such as use of Wikis, blogs, online chat boards, and Google Docs (web-based word processor) (Yim and Warschauer, 2017). These social platforms facilitate useful writing practices like coauthoring, co-editing, community of writers (as in Wenger's (1998) community of practice), and thinking together (as argued by Mercer *et al*., 2017). All of these concepts of writing collaboratively or collectively are not only extended by technology but also are made accessible and easy. For instance, building an online community of

practice online for writers facilitates sharing of ideas or texts, negotiating and constructing meaning together, or discussing controversial ideas.

The use of these collaboration platforms has been investigated widely in teaching of ESL writing in numerous contexts worldwide. For instance, Kessler *et al.* (2012) investigated the use of Google Docs for both planning and writing collaboratively amongst thirty-eight second language learners. They concluded with positive results showing efforts made at the level of language accuracy and meaning making. Additionally, a study (Lee, 2010) used Wiki and affirmed the role of the peer as provider of support to L2 writing. Lee's study shows that students benefited from collaborative work regarding error correction and content organisation. Miyazoe and Anderson (2010), in a Japanese university, investigated the effects of three web-based boards for collaboration: forum, blog and wiki. They indicate progress in the quality of the students written texts and, interestingly, their ability to differentiate among genres. It can be noted the great potential held for the use of cloud-based tools for the support of ESL writing.

Additionally, it must be acknowledged that using of technological devices such as phones makes up a considerable part of students' lives and identities. In fact, it is what they do the most. In the U.S.A., according to a recent Pew research centre's study (in 2015), 92% of teens go online daily with as much as 78% of them having this on their personal phones (Lenhart, 2015). In Australia, it was reported that almost half of 10 to 11 year-old children go online and 37% of 8 to 9-year-olds go online with an online device such as mobile, IPad, or IPod (Australian Communications and Media Authority, 2013). Not only this, but also students tend to bring their own mobile devices to the classroom (Sharples, 2003). Dismissing the new technological devices from the educational process could leave the practice of education behind. It is necessary to keep up-to-date with the community in which the students live by using new technologies. However, a more difficult issue is that the solutions proposed for integrating technological devices in the past may already seem outdated.

Regarding the present study, mobility is central to data collection of the different genres. Previous studies, such as Lenhart (2015) and Sharples (2003), suggest optimistic uses of mobile phones for textual communication which can make mobile texts quicker and easier. For this reason, textual data gathered in the present study are in electronic forms and communicated mostly through mobile phones.

2.3.2 Affordances Theory

Based on Vygotsky's notion of 'mediation,' technology is considered as a tool for offering opportunities for growth. Closely linked to this notion, Affordances Theory emerged to offer a detailed understanding of how technology can play a role in education to support the learning process of the learner. Historically, affordances terminology was coined by the perceptual psychologist Gibson in his seminal book **The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception** (McGrenere and Ho, 2000). This approach was originally used to discuss the ecological development of humans (Conole, 2013; Gaver, 1991). However; it was Donald Norman who first introduced 'affordances theory' into the Human Technological Interactions (HTI) field in his book **The Psychology of Everyday Things** (Boyle and Cook, 2004). He tailored the concept to the design of technology and to the users.

Affordances theory as initially proposed involves opportunities in the physical environment that offer 'animals' the chance to take action (Gibson, 1979). Yet, it is more complicated in that it also is:

> An affordance is neither an objective property nor a subjective property; or it is both if you like. An affordance cuts across the dichotomy of subjective–objective and helps us to understand its inadequacy. It is equally a fact of the environment and a fact of behavior. It is both physical and psychical, yet neither. An affordance points both ways, to the environment and to the observer (Gibson, 1979:12).

Gibson explains that it is a combination of the perception of environment and the perception of ones' ability to take action. In such a manner, environmental resources are mentally processed. Though Chemero (2003) calls it a direct theory of affordance in that it assumes meaning as only physically impeded in the environment, this interpretation seems debatable in that it assumes mental

processes too, as when Gibson writes: “An affordance cuts across the dichotomy of subjective–objective and helps us to understand its inadequacy.”

Interestingly, Chemero (2003) moves the affordance concept from an ecological analytical view explaining actions to a wider application to a view of life and a more cognitively expanded concept to explain relationships. Dimensions of affordances are interrelations between features of the environment (not properties), situations (not things/physical environment), real and perceived, not specific to the actors. In a similar vein, Salomon (1993) articulates affordances of a particular entity as their existing and perceived features that open up multiple actions towards this entity. This definition, in fact, takes into consideration the variety of actions taken in life generally.

In relation to technology and teaching writing, the previous arguments conceptualise important parameters to interrelate technological features into students’ actual process of writing in the sense that there are features offered by technology, situated in educational contexts, perceived by learners, and awaiting the learner to take action in order to write. In what follows, technological affordances are presented in relation with writing.

Technological Affordances

Technological affordances include the intended and unintended functions of the designed system. They include intentionally designed attributes of the system and other attributes that result from creatively using/extending the use of designed technological systems. Conole and Dyke (2004) list many technological affordances including: accessibility, speed of change, diversity, communication and collaboration, reflection, multimodality and non-linearity; improvements to risk, fragility and uncertainty, immediacy, monopolization and surveillance. However, this long list was criticized by Boyle and Cook (2004) and later by Conole (2013) who argue that much of the mentioned affordances are not clearly explained to inform the actions of the users of technology. Indeed, teachers of writing need much more than a general criterion in order to be able to explore the affordances in their own contexts. This list is obviously only useful for describing ICT and its uses (Conole, 2013). Conole, on the other

hand, attested a shorter list of affordances including: collaboration, reflection, interaction, dialogue, creativity, organisation, inquiry and authenticity. This is not to say that one list is better than the other, as what might be effectively 'proved' as affordance by one teacher, might not be the same with another. With so much being said about the technological-educational affordances, a careful integration of technology should be called for. It is tempting for a teacher to embed technology based on what many say. Certainly, it is important to bear in mind that 'contextual' challenges may outweigh the visualised 'affordances'.

Nonetheless, student agency is central to the discussions in both technical affordances and the SCTs. Integral to research on literacy and writing specifically, student agency involves selectively choosing a particular position to negotiate meaning while writing and; as a result, different identities are formed (Kostouli, 2009). Hence, the role undertaken consciously by the writer is influenced by the social political context in which composition happens. Moreover, Moje *et al.* (2009) talk about the writer's imposition of an identity on the text by embracing specific roles. Based on the previous discussions on social theories, a writer is the 'agent' of his own learning and thus consciously selects whichever available social artefact to mediate the process of writing. This also implies that writing can take a range of different 'realities' they have imprinted in different identities. Therefore, research on textual analysis has the potential to reveal the cultural interactions in the texts by looking at the multi-layered meaning making, self-imposing contents, and referring to the outer world.

Not only is the role of the student important in the process of L2 'writing' development, but also the role of the teacher is a highly influential factor in forming the basis of 'writing' as a 'performance' – in contrast with Chomsky's thoughts, as collaborative act in alliance with Vygotsky's theory, or as a 'recursive process' in alliance with Hyland's work. The following section explores the different approaches that are used in teaching L2 'writing'.

2.4 Pedagogical Implications and Evidence-based Practices

Understanding how writers write and how technology might support this in different ways for different writers, raises questions for how this might be implemented in the L2 writing classroom. An important issue highlighted in the previous section related to writers themselves and how they develop from 'novice' writers to more expert writers, especially in relation to how this occurs in the L2 contexts. Pedagogy needs to take into account the status and understanding attributed to a writer. In terms of operationalising composition, this section looks at writing as translated into practices of teaching, which is essentially informed by the differing theories mentioned earlier. It thus aims to look at understandings of writing that are affected by the wider political, policy and pedagogic agenda in which learning occurs. As such, writing is seen as context specific and influenced by decisions made inside classroom or by higher authorities. Thus, it is argued that classroom-specific decisions should be based on robust practices of how to teach writing.

2.4.1 Approaches to Teaching Writing in ESL contexts

It is worth mentioning that many approaches to teaching academic writing have emerged over time and have their own significance in the field of ESL. There are four dominant approaches to teaching writing in ESL contexts: controlled composition, rhetorical functions (both referred to as product approach in Raimes, 1991), the process approach, content-based approach, and genre approach (Paltridge *et al*., 2009). Each one has a different focus and different theoretical foundation. In practice individual teachers rarely draw from a single approach: at best, elements of each of these approaches and informing principals are evident in L2 writing contexts.

2.4.1.1 Content-Based Approach

The content-based approach to teaching writing involves practising writing after being provided with information or content (Richard and Schmidt, 2002). As such exposure to and practice of the target language occurs through contents (Curtain and Pesalo, 1994; and Stoller, 2002). It can range from strictly content driven input to language focused input (Snow, 1998).

With the varying demands of ESL learners, it seems this model offers a wide framework in which writing can be practised implicitly. In doing so, as Nunan (2006) argues, the incorporation of authentic texts into learning is a key starting point for immersion. He also argues that content-based teaching attends to real needs outside of the curricular agenda in an attempt to link writing tasks with 'target tasks' which Brown (2001) also summarises as providing learning of skills that students need for real use of the language.

However, content-based writing comes with certain demands on the part of ESL teachers and ESL students. For instance, students are expected to learn new vocabulary to be used in writing as a demonstration of their ability to communicate the chosen content appropriately. To reply to Nunan's (2006) previous argument for content-based writing, authentic texts have been seen as a challenge for students to administer and deal with. In fact, Sheppard's (1997) survey indicated that almost 90 percent of ESL teachers in the U.S. tend to modify learning materials in order to suit their ESL learners. A similar outcome was reported by Solomn and Rhods (1996) that such a curriculum places demands upon the students in terms of having prior knowledge and being culturally uniform with the target language. This claim is backed by Warrington's (2008) account which suggested that ESL students usually lack suitable knowledge about language and culture leading to serious consequences such as demotivation and anxiety. Moreover, content writing suggests that students are assumed to have basic writing skills to be able to send a message effectively. Giving them a short time to practise a foreign skill makes it difficult for a learner to find his/her own identity as writer, and so the result is that they only become a reporter of content chosen by someone else.

2.4.1.2 Process Approach

Recently, there has been an increasing emphasis on the process approach in the field of second language teaching. Its strength in supporting an L2 learner stems from its simplicity and clarity. For one thing, it breaks down mental processes into stages (Hyland, 2002). Additionally, it is a cyclical and recursive processes of writing, as exemplified in Figure 2.2, including key stages: preparing for writing (through brainstorming and planning), writing, and

rewriting or editing which are, as discussed earlier, based on Hayes and Flowers' model (1980). These stages do not follow sequentially allowing ample time for reflection and making changes to the text. This self-reflection and rewriting can enhance the writers' consciousness of their own performance. Also, it is responsive to the needs of the individual learner. As such, it brings neither assumptions about a writer's prior knowledge nor pressure to master a linguistic form or structure to go through it.

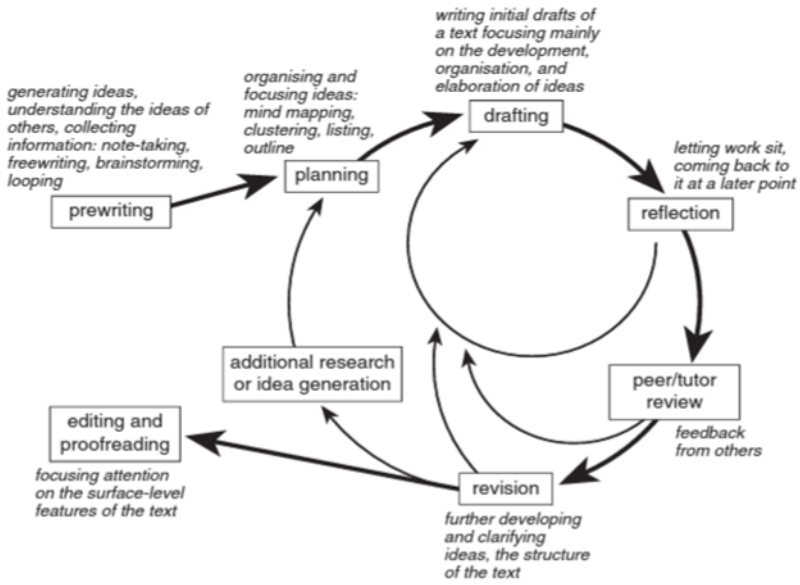


Figure 2.2: Stages of Process Approach to Teaching Writing (Coffin *et al.* 2005, p.34)

A particular strength of process writing over content writing is that it provides space for idea development (Zamel, 1983) that is self-initiated; thus, supporting personal tone, style, and voice. Moreover, this "helps student writers to understand their own composing process and to build their repertoires of strategies" (Shih, 1986: 623) throughout the various stages of the process. Relating to the idea of the discovery of a personal writing strategy, a key factor is the additional encouragement of an inner voice. This argument stems from works of Murray and others (Hyland, 2002) who argue that writers have an inner voice, which needs to be unlocked and espoused. Self-discovery is aroused by free expression (ibid). Additionally, development of composition goes along

with clarity of thinking which is essential for developing personality and personal positioning.

One important feature emphasised in the process writing approach is dividing different requirements of task completion into stages. Accuracy is delayed to the latest stages of production (Raimes, 1991) so that fluency is focused on in the early stages. Meaning making is conceived of as an active process in which a writer engages in order to refine a message. Allowing space for meaning construction can enhance the consistency of argument through a text. Its strength lies with providing ample time for each stage, and to prioritise the development of ideas into texts.

Additionally, it is a non-linear and a recursive process of writing which offers an individualised writing experience tailored to ones' learning pace (DiStefano and Killion, 1984; Raimes, 1991; Zamel, 1983). In this way, it allows for the discovery of one's skills (Hyland, 2003). Moreover, it provides staged writing opportunities (Hyland, 2002) in which the learners increase their understanding of their individual writing skills.

Despite it providing a pedagogy informed by a clear step-by-step understanding of the writing process, the process approach has been critiqued by socio-cultural advocators. As Martlew (1983:313) remarks, examining the process of language production is notoriously difficult. Although learners experience differing stages during composition, it cannot be demonstrated that composition occurs as a result of fragmenting writing into different stages. Another point is that socially-constructed meanings have been given no attention in process writing. It fails to take into account external factors (for instance the influence of teaching, or nurturing) that influence and shape composition (Hyland, 2003). Furthermore, an approach based solely on the process itself provides no conditions or criteria for effective texts which makes it open for the teacher to assess based on randomly selected assessment. This issue can be a notable pitfall for writing in the ESL field where competency in language could be made one criteria for assessment thus shifting attention to language knowledge and away from the process by which a text is constructed.

2.4.1.3 Product Approach

The product approach has its roots in linguistics whereby writing is broken down into its linguistic constituents: structure and lexemes. It investigates the product (final outcome) either through analysis of formal surface elements or discourse structure (Hyland, 2002). Teaching of writing informed by the product approach focuses on learners' mastery of syntactic elements of language. In a sense, it foregrounds the accuracy of final texts with particular attention given to the overall organization and layout of genres (Raimes, 1991).

A major concern for critics of this approach is the practice of employing non-authentic activities (Ferjani, 2010). Using non-authentic tasks entails the production of written chunks centred around the requirements of tasks. Typical practices involve combining sentences using appropriate logical connectors, rewriting sentences using the correct tenses and choosing appropriate words in cloze tasks. Consequently, textual products are often meaningless to the writers as there is no need to express their own content or message. There is a danger that an overemphasis on product will lead to learners only engaging in writing activities that entail practice in order to master linguistic features. This would explain why learners become knowledgeable in the technicalities of writing (e.g. identifying topic sentence, thesis statement, using passive tenses for certain contexts) but fail to develop skills related to clarity and fluency of content.

Theoretically, this product approach has two strands. The stronger version is 'text-as-autonomous-object' (Hyland, 2002) in which attention is paid to accuracy and coherence of texts. This seems in line with structuralism and Chomsky's generative transformational theory (Hyland, 2002). The accuracy of text over other factors is foregrounded. Hyland refers to the concept 'langue' as the underlying theoretical basis for a composition informed by this approach as it involves the demonstration of rule-based knowledge. Texts are perceived as autonomous and removed from other essential forces (writer, context, reader). The relationship between thought and expression is that meaning is embedded in grammatically correct set/organisation of structures that ostensibly convey a

semantic role. Collective interpretation and different understanding of texts are neglected implying that readers are treated as passive receptors of texts as they have not been taken into account when the text is constructed (Hyland, 2002).

Due to its focuses on accuracy and demands on showing command of linguistic aspects, the product approach has been challenged by recent conceptual shifts on writing and viewed as unable to prepare students in various aspects of writing as a more holistic activity. Also, products of writing composed in the same classroom can be homogeneous due to the emphasis on accuracy (Hyland, 2002). Texts may only be proof of linguistic performance, depriving them from their actual meaning in life, thus failing to prepare students for actual acts of communication. Moreover, some classroom activities which involve imitation fail to prepare students to write purposefully (to contrast/compare, cause/effect). These activities do little to develop the mental repertoire needed for composition (Myskow and Gordon, 2009). Additionally, Barnett (1999) voices a related concern over an overly linguistic focus. He states that "considering form and accuracy too soon abstracts the mental activity necessary to activate and communicate ideas" (Barnett, 1999: 17). Furthermore, the complexity of human communication is reduced to units that are concrete (Hyland, 2002). Working this way runs the danger of being tempted to only practise small chunks of language such as individual sentences. This approach seems to deconstruct language to its constituents; yet that is removed from understanding the process of human learning.

Yet, there is a second model of the content approach that can be an alternative understanding. Rather than focusing on the text as an object; it considers the text as evidence of discourse: 'text-as-discourse' (Hyland, 2002). This leads to rather different consequences for practising writing because the tasks are used to integrate real-life events into written texts, thereby resulting in purposeful communicative acts that are accomplished by varying use of linguistic structures (Hyland, 2002). Grammatical structures are no longer demonstrated as the end purpose of the task; rather, the attention is on the differing functions

of grammar for the 'deeper-level meaning'. Therefore, the role of the writer as actively processing differing meanings in texts is evident.

A focus on product and process does not need to be mutually exclusive. A pedagogy based on both the process and product approach of teaching writing like the 'Teaching and Learning Cycle pedagogy' (Coffin *et al.,* 2005) allows the learner to both analyse the text and experience the process of writing. This pedagogy enhances learners' critical analysis of written texts and consequently raises self-consciousness of one's own written performance. Coffin *et al*. (2005) list four main stages. First is building context which is similar to the pre-writing stage in the process approach. Second is modelling and deconstruction which entails looking at examples and identifying key aspects of register, language and organisation. The third stage is joint construction collaboration when learners and the teacher collaboratively construct a piece of written work and discuss how parts of text can be constructed. This stage includes the extended concept: 'scaffolding' that includes a collaborative interaction where learners understand new knowledge from others – either a peer or a teacher (Maybin, *et al*., 1992). Finally, independent construction is a stage that involves individual efforts to produce written works. This phase demonstrates evidence of internalisation: a central concept to socio-cultural theory. In fact, the last stage pulls together most of the writing endeavours when learners go through many processes non-linearly and recursively. It is, then, the role of the teacher that is minimised and limited (Hyland, 2003). Learners are given a chance to experience the writing process; it is left to the teacher to decide how and when to tackle linguistic obstacles and difficulties: either to handle them immediately, leave them to the end of writing process, or not focus on them.

It seems that both approaches to writing, i.e. product and process, can provide important opportunities for ESL writing. Not least because research focusing on the product approach will lead to analytical approaches that focus on analysis of text, writer, and audience. On the other hand, research focusing on the process approach is likely to elaborate on approaches that focus on observation of writers' behaviour. Analysis of these areas stem from different approaches yet can provide a wider understanding of the writing. Situating the

present study as informed by the approaches of writing teaching, the present study aims to explore the way writing is taught and evaluate whether the taught approach reflects aspects identified as important in literature.

2.4.1.4 Genre-based Approach to teaching writing

In response to the limitations of the process approach to teaching writing, genre-based approaches came to focus on social aspects. In comparison to the product approach, the genre approach shares the same concerns over text by focusing on how well the final text conforms to particular demands (i.e. writing to inform, writing to persuade, writing to instruct). This term first emerged in the 1980s in the field of second language writing through the work of Swales (Paltridge, 2014). Some of the key scholars in this field are John Swales, Tony Dudley-Evans, and Ken Hyland (ibid). It refers to a **class of written texts in a particular context to convey a functional and a social goal with particular structures specific to each set of class** (Paltridge *et al*., 2009; Paltridge, 2014; Swales, 2004). Generally, this approach draws on perspectives and issues emerging from socio-cultural, linguistic and cognitive theories.

Sociocultural theory seems to interplay with other theories of development in the applied teaching of writing as genre. There is a close alliance with and representation of societal concerns and common issues, conflicts and debates. Bakhtin (1986) and Bawarshi (2000), for instance, consider genre as highly context-bound and affected by the changes in the political, societal, and intellectual context. For them, genre represents society and is shaped by modern life. This marks genres as classes of texts changing with life (Hyland, 2002c). In this sense, new forms of genres have appeared recently with the advancement of technology (i.e. blog texts, Facebook texts).

Another dimension of genre is that its purposive selection of functional linguistic use is grounded in applied linguistics theory. This side of genre makes it similar to the views of text-as-discourse, as discussed previously in the content approach. Hyland (2013:18) explains that genre-based teaching offers “explicit and systematic explanations of the ways language functions in social contexts.” This means that language interpretation and explanation arise as part of their

usage socially. Referring back to the distinction made by linguists between the surface and deep level of meaning embedded in texts or sentences, as discussed early in linguistics theories, the deep-level meaning is extracted through the context in which it is used, while there is no inherent meaning in the structure itself. This shows that application in teaching facilitates useful thinking on grammar for communicative purposes, a departure from the traditional applied linguistics fields which have tended only to be concerned with the teaching of isolated sentences.

Regarding the functional patterns, this is theoretically based on language as socially constructed (Knapped and Watkins, 2005). Functionally, according to Sidaway (2006), it involves the 'magnificent seven' and details them as follows: recount, narrative, explanation, information report, procedure, discussion, exposition. More distinctively, Paltridge (2014) distinguishes between two categories of genres: micro and macro. The micro genres are components of the macro ones. He refers to the functional moves or patterns that are detailed by Sidaway (2006) as the micro genres, while the macro genres are the complete written work such as assignments, reports or essays. As for the second part of genre, the social function or purpose is to communicate a social issue such as criticising, ironizing, entertaining, informing, clarifying, evaluating or expressing concern (Nwogu, 1991).

Genre-based pedagogy has indeed informed teaching in many L2 contexts (Hyon, 1996). Most importantly is the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach to genre to which the works of Swales have made a significant contribution (Johns, 2010). Within this field, students are taught the formal features of genres so that they can recognise them in reading or use them for writing (Hyon, 1996). As a result, ESL learners are enabled to actively and effectively participate in writings situated outside, beyond the walls of their ESL classroom (Hyland, 2007). This is a strength that is rarely offered explicitly by the previous approaches to teaching writing. It in fact surpasses previous approaches to teaching writing by defining elements that are part of text such as moves, linguistic features, or functions needed. As such, when talking about structure that is located within a context (as described in Kay and Dudley-

Evans, 1998), applied linguistics becomes a life science that practically demonstrates how language is extracted from and embedded in real texts as well as how it can be practically written.

A major advantage it can offer for teaching is noted as follows:

> The focus on imparting certain genre knowledge is part of a "short-cut" method of raising students' proficiency in a relatively limited period of time to the level required of them by their departments and supervisors. The imparting of genre knowledge involves increasing awareness of the conventions of writing, and teaching students to produce texts that, by following the conventions, appear well-formed and suitably structured to native-speaker readers (Dudley-Evans, 2002: 151).

Dudley-Evans taps into the point of concern of most practitioners teaching writing, which is that of time availability and time efficiency. Nevertheless, given how genre is usually taught by providing models and introducing moves to apply, materials are introduced in a relatively short time leaving space for students to practise writing in genre. Discussion by teachers about genre practices highlighted that teaching through genre gives space for flexibility and innovative writing which usually comes after analyzing models of genres (ibid). This gives space for growth of personal identity through writing.

However, the genre pedagogy approach to writing seems to be representative of the complexity involved, thus leaving a plethora of pedagogical decisions to be imparted in the classroom. Assumptions are that teachers are creative and imaginative so that ‘writing’ does not become dull and ‘stereotyped’. On the contrary, genres should be used as resources for students to resort to for exemplification and as models (Kay and Dudley-Evans, 1998). Focus on specific genres can limit the writers’ experiences to certain formulaic writing where learners become familiar with writing certain genres at the expense of other possible useful genres. This is because being involved in a particular genre requires considerable attention to be paid to it.

As a result of the criticisms, a general distinction of types of genre in the present thesis is made – in reference to the general characteristics of texts and their functional rule and purpose within a social context – as advised by Dudley-Evans (2002: 152). He writes that genre should not have “a certain fixed form

and that examples that do not conform to the established model should be discounted". This allows for creativity in developing new genres as was seen through new online discourse such as texts seen on Wikis, Blogs, Facebook, which have their own moves and textual conventions that distinguish them. Dudley-Evans's advice is central to contexts of teaching ESL, with disparity in society and culture and language genre. In other words, certain practices that appear in writings in a particular place should not necessarily be the same in other places due to holistic reasons such as politics, nurturing, or educational agenda. These guidelines could agree with Swales' (1990) conceptualisation of genre as having a communicative purpose and having "structure, style, content and intended audience" (Swales, 1990: 85). In such a perspective, genres are texts that share common identifiable features: form, purpose, style, and communicative content. This view is also agreed by Hyland (2004: 5) who sees it as an attempt to help "teachers to look beyond content, composing process and textual forms to see writing as an attempt to communicate with readers-to better understand the ways that language patterns are used to accomplish coherent purposeful prose." Writing in genres goes beyond communicating with the surroundings to include a representation of others in the written text. As such, the role of the writer, part of social identity of language, and **other-in-the-text** are complementary parts of studying genre. Hence, the two concepts of genre and audience will be discussed closely. Firstly, of many examples: three of the most commonly practised genres in ESL are introduced, i.e. academic essay, diary text and blog text. Following that, audience theory, as closely linked to thinking of genre, is presented. These are ideas that will inform the particular design of my own study: students will be supported in writing different genres, namely the academic essay, a blog and a personal diary with a view to understanding how they construct the concept of audience.

2.4.1.4.1 Genre of academic Essay

In the arena of English for Academic purposes (EAP), texts are meant to address a pre-defined academic readership: the final written work is to conform to what academic readers usually read/expect. Attention is given to academic conventions, patterns and vocabulary. EAP is characterised by the accurate

use of technical language (Hamp-Lyons and Heasley, 2006). Whereas academic writing is generally understood as “writing the journal article, the prerogative of academic professionals” (Bloor, 1996: 59), this becomes complex in second language writing contexts as it is oriented towards task-specific criteria or towards the teacher for the purposes of assessment. The text may not be received by a wider academic readership. Despite this fact, academic essays are expected to follow academic conventions such as style, tone and formality. As such, a variety of academic genres are seen ranging from reports, articles, letters, summary, or thesis.

In terms of the social functional aspect of the essay genre, like any other genres, it is enacted through the textual structure. In the literature, this textual structure is analysed through Paltridge’s (2014) ‘micro genre’ or Jordan’s’ (1997) ‘rhetorical functions’ which include the following: recount, narration, explanation, reporting, procedural writing, discussion, exposition (Sidaway, 2006), cause-effect, description. Such functions allow the intended purpose of the text – through which a text is understood and responded to – to be performed.

Vis-à-vis ways of introducing genres pedagogy in L2, Hyland (1990) presents a useful framework for teaching the essay genre. In his work he demonstrates that there is an inherent structure of text that occurs in a conventional and stereotypical sequence. He also stresses the importance of foregrounding structural aspects of textual functions of genre to L2 writers who come from schematically different backgrounds. The patterns are as follows in table 2.1:

Table 1. Elements of structure of the Argumentative Essay

STAGE	MOVE
1. Thesis. Introduces the proposition to be argued.	(Gambit) Attention Grabber — controversial statement or dramatic illustration. (Information) Presents background material for topic contextualization. (Evaluation) Positive gloss — brief support of proposition. (Marker) Introduces and/or identifies a list.
2. Argument Discusses grounds for thesis. (Four move argument sequence can be repeated indefinitely)	Marker Signals the introduction of a claim and relates it to the text. (Restatement) Rephrasing or repetition of proposition. Claim States reason for acceptance of the proposition. Typically based on: a. Strength of perceived shared assumptions. b. A generalization based on data or evidence. c. Force of conviction Support States the grounds which underpin the claim. Typically: a. Explicating assumptions used to make claim. b. Providing data or citing references.
3. Conclusion Synthesizes discussion and affirms the validity of the thesis.	(Marker) Signals conclusion boundary Consolidation Presents the significance of the argument stage to the proposition. (Affirmation) Restates proposition. (Close) Widens context or perspective of proposition

Table 2.1: Hyland's Structural Moves of Argumentative Essay (1990, p.69)

Nevertheless, these moves of essay genre are described as only one variation of many existing within one area or across different domains of writing (Dudley-Evans, 2002b; Johns, 1997). To substantiate this point, Bruce's (2010) study can be cited as it aimed to investigate both linguistic and structural aspects of essays in two different fields of Sociology and English. Its conclusion supports Dudley-Evan's argument that each discipline indeed varies in its organisational resources. Hence, Hyland's moves are not wholly representative of the differing structures of essay. Despite this important caveat, the 'moves' can certainly serve to support essay teaching with considerable clarity in a variety of contexts. Dudley-Evan's observation is particularly pertinent when teaching becomes overly prescriptive, constraining essay genre so as to obligatorily adhere to a specific format. Caution against prescriptive teaching methods

should perhaps be urged, particularly if there is no subject-specific evidence to support this teaching.

2.4.1.4.2 Genre of Diary

An alternative genre commonly introduced in classrooms is the diary genre that seems to be used as a means to document evidence on the learning process. Due to its nature, it has been widely discussed as part of social research in the form of personal logs towards the experiences of the learners in various ways: as a reflection tool (Barjesteh *et al.*, 2011); reflective diary (Travers, 2011); diary for professional development (Pavlovich *et al.,* 2009); and diary as learning tool (Guy, 2015). Indeed, it retains this popularity within many fields, not only in L2 contexts, due to its distinguishing features as being: a record about oneself by oneself, in a narrative, descriptive and reflective manner, and event retelling/recount (Pavlovich *et al.,* 2009; Oxford, 2011).

However, diary is also a method for recording data for research purposes. Within social research studies, the merits of asking participants to keep diaries is that this is one of the few methods that can tell the researcher about introspective accounts of unobserved behaviours and feelings (Faerch and Kasper, 1987; Jacelon and Imperio, 2009). Without doubt, diaries potentially serve to offer deep insights and understandings about issues over time (McDonough and McDonough, 1997), which may explain reasons for changes by a participant and can provide a continuous systemic report. So, diary keeping gathers different experiences, feelings, perspectives and beliefs about the observable and internal worlds of diarists. Diary is by no means similar to one-time measures, i.e. questionnaires, psychometric or projective tests, of continuous and evolving personal characteristics, i.e. attitudes, thoughts, values and feelings.

To focus discussion in this section, it is important to highlight that in the context of the present study diary is both an example of a genre and so a written form compared with other forms, and a means of data collection and thus a means of accessing thoughts from the participants about writing in L2 classrooms. The second form is considered as a method of data collection and hence is

discussed in Chapter Three. Discussion here is to shed light on the characteristics and educational role of the diary genre.

Diaries are akin to different genres such as letters or autobiography in that, in nature, they are written by adding regular or periodic contributions and having a personal element. Additionally, they allow access to the internal worlds of writers such as values, attitudes, fears, hopes, events, or thoughts (Bolton, 2001; Cucu-Onacea, 2013; Oxford 2011). They all have the potential to reveal the complex 'interactions' between both observable and hidden contexts (Oxford, 2011). Let us not forget the main issues discussed in defining genre; namely, that each have different social and linguistic functions. For this reason, diaries are aimed at their audience or 'discourse community' (Swales, 1990). Yet, due to their use in L2 educational contexts to practise writing, their audience is at one level the self while at another the teacher or researcher.

With the advent of technology, the notion of electronic diaries is introduced in teaching writing for its differing affordances. For one, the e-diary is user-friendly and has 'programming benefits' such as recording timing (Bolger *et al.*, 2003), keeping track of the geography of diary entry and sometimes momenta pictures. This is significant for diary use in research as it is important to see the frequency and timing of diary writing. Another point is that information recorded in diaries is more secure using electronic devices than using a paper and pen (Bolger *et al*., 2003; Morrison *et al.* 2009) given the security features of a device or password-protected file itself. Thirdly, it is particularly useful when considering the recruitment of participants who are demographically inaccessible on day-to-day basis. This is indeed very useful as the students of CAS come from different regions of the Sultanate of Oman and thus, writing their diaries can be done in the comfort of their homes and their entries can then be sent instantaneously. Hence, participants compiled and completed diary entries whenever it suited them (Hegan *et al*., 2005). This perhaps facilitated more data entries due to ease of use. A very important feature is activating notifications in the application for the diarist to write the diary entry (Piasecki *et al*., 2007; Morrison et al., 2009). In fact, the e-diary may be less subjective than paper and pen diary as the latter technique may only be

completed once daily, which requires retrospection on the focus event (Bolger *et al*., 2003; and Morrison *et al.* 2009). E-diary is employed in the present study as a text for analysis and as a report in which data are considered are used (see Methodology Chapter).

Perhaps the advantages of the diary work may also be a double-edged sword. It was taken for granted as an easily understood genre; consequently, studies that explore its rhetorical, linguistic and structural features have rarely been carried out. The issue is substantiated by the practices of studies that tended to use diary as means for data collection (such as Guy, 2015; Jacelon and Imperio, 2005; Jones, 2008; Ma and Oxford, 2014; Simard, 2010; Travers, 2011). Hence, it is substantially used as a method to elicit data on feelings, experiences, and lives of learners. Despite their use, there may be some negligence in terms of understanding the epistemology of the diary in the ESL domain. When study participants are involved in the act of commenting on their own thoughts and feelings, they are involved in rationalising or seeking to explain their own thinking. This process may raise doubts for them over what they could know. Other issues that are taken for granted, simply neglected or seemingly not of interest to teaching diary relate to the difficulties L2 students face when translating their thoughts as they occur whilst their linguistic competency fails them. As such, learner diaries may be revealing to investigate the thread of identity in L2 writing not only in terms of ideas reflected, but also regarding the relationship with linguistic performance.

Another problematic matter in describing diary is that an inherent aspect in interpreting 'diary' as a form of writing – self-addressiveness. It is clear that diaries have a basic and clear addressee – that is the diarist him/herself (Cucu-Oancea, 2013; Paperon, 2004); though this notion may be outdated in some contexts with its current expanded use in research and the online published form diaries. Perhaps, interestingly, linking back to thoughts of Bakhtin, the diary triggers an immediate association that it is for oneself then the dialogic nature of talk-writing is closed and does not expect a response from oneself since it is written personally. It is worth examining the effect of using diary to practise writing as educationally initiated which may to a great degree be

disrupted by the lack of reader. Such a manner of use can of course change 'diary' to more closely resemble an essay.

Studies on Diary

Important lessons can be drawn on the use of diaries either as a research tool or a personal log. Diarists may feel confused as to what is the purpose of the diary (a teaching diary or research diary). To keep diary writing as focused and clear as possible, two different approaches have been identified in literature. The first one is using solicited diary, as conducted by Jacelon and Imperio (2005) where learners are supported with a set of open-ended questions regarding a particular event on which they wish to keep their diary. This in fact could be effective for teaching purposes and for first-time diarists. It helps diarists to stay focused, organised, and less repetitive. A second approach that can be adopted is giving a particular theme to report as seen in Travers (2011). He trained students to be self-aware of stress by different tools such as "Twenty Statements Test (TST), Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), The Social Mirror Activity, Johari Window, Type behaviour and other stress-related measures" (p. 207). Through use of these tools, sources of stress could be discussed and identified, thereby dealing with their stressors.

From the short review of some studies on use of diary for educational purposes seen in Table 2.2, it seems that the most investigated issues in diary genre are not those aroused in the original theories of genre-pedagogy and other critical issues for advancing diary as mode of teaching writing in ESL contexts, as discussed previously in the debates around theories. Referring back to such arguments, it seems that the diary genre has not been taught or investigated as genre that is usually written for oneself to be private, rather as a public document to be shared with others. Another issue relates to its conventional and rhetorical aspects; ESL genres are not given their attention in research. In particular, how L2 writers engage in understanding and writing English genres needs more attention.

Resource	Main theme/focus	Synopsis	Methodology and context
Chao (2013)	Diary to take notes.	This study reports results of an experimental course that aimed to teach English by use of foreign films as tool of instruction. The participants were able to note and interpret attitudes of peoples in film. They also perceived the course positively.	Taiwan, University EFL student (52 student), Diary method, Experimental study, Elective course for one semester (100 minutes of instruction, 180 minutes of tutorials per week, Content analyses on perception of participants, and development.
Barjesteh *et al.* (2011)	Diary is teaching method- grammar	This work aims to explore participants change in attitude when diary is used. Additionally, it explores grammatical improvement when the diary is used as a teaching method. The study concluded that diary writing is productive and can be a creative pre-writing task. Moreover, there is no significant relationship between diary writing and development of grammatical accuracy.	Iran, University, 44 males in their 3rd year (studying mechanical engineering major), Experimental (pre- and post-test), data: expository writing and questionnaire
Yavarian *et al.* (2015)	Dairy writing - Grammar Acquisition	This study involved use of experimental study where one group received treatment of writing diary, the other group was only taught grammar traditionally. Writing occurs at home after each session. It indicates that there is an increase in 'grammatical acquisition' with treatment group.	Iran, two classrooms, intermediate level.
Rasouli and Shoari (2015)	Diary tool for exercising new vocabulary	They investigated the relationship between writing dairy with specific task to practice new learned vocabulary through quasi-experimental study. The study indicates improvement in those practising diary writing.	Iran, Turkish 60 pre-intermediate level

Table 2.2: Review of Studies on Educational Diaries

Another critical issue about the status of diaries in ESL contexts is that sometimes studies are far from clear on how the diary is addressed. The issue is that even when the diary genre suggests associations with language increase or 'acquisition' as termed by Yavarian *et al.* (2015), it is not clear how or whether the diary genre was introduced to the students. The study claims that there is evidence of increasing grammatical knowledge, which contradicts Barjesteh *et al.*'s (2011) study even though both focus on similar backgrounds. In

addressing diary as genre in both studies, it is not clear what conditions contributed to the increase or stability of learning. In a different study conducted in Iran on Turkish learners, specific instructions were given to students to use new vocabulary to describe daily routines (in Rasouli and Shoari, 2015). Although this study gives prominence to use of diary as task-specific, evidence on vocabulary learning was inconclusive due to two main reasons. Firstly, practice is important for knowledge increase – the control group was deprived of this. Thus, increase in knowledge could be attributed to that opportunity. Secondly, the way the diary is implemented in practice may have changed it from its original attested sense. For this reason, it is stressed here that sense of 'diary' writing is messy in practice and further focus to disentangle how it is helpful, providing evidence to substantiate this, is essential.

2.4.1.4.3 Genre of Blogs

Another widely popular educative genre is text in weblog, which is frequently shortened as blog. Its use in education goes back more than 17 years now; according to Harwood (2010) who has tracked it for eight years so far. The blog text is considered a stand-alone genre due to its established characteristics that stem from its context of use. It has two main features; firstly, time of response is continuous similar to chatting; secondly, including two bodies of texts. Concerning time of response, it is both synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous communication is immediate interacting and discoursing at the same time, similar to a live interaction such as interaction on phone calls or live chats. Conversely, communication is named as asynchronous when it starts and one side, i.e. the blogger or follower, is 'inactive' and comments at a different time. Asynchronous forms of communication were found to play a complementary role as they do not impose any pressure to make immediate responses (Wegerif, 1998).

Regarding the latter feature of the text of blog; there are two main parts: the main text and the interactive function in comments. Hence, blogs are interactive and accumulative by the function of posting comments. Comments are screened chronologically from the most recent to the latest and are usually written in an informal style (McIntosh, 2015). The feature 'add comment' is

included, which is available to the reader who can comment by a question, a critique, an explanatory thought, or a personal story. This creates an interaction between the initiator blogger and other bloggers that makes the topic/theme/ideas accumulative. To each comment given by a follower, the blogger or any other follower can reply or add another comment which can extend the communication on each topic. This feature makes blogging distinctive from many other social interactive tools. As a result, either one comment is responded to, or a new comment is created.

The educational blog

The blog is a free 'public' tool and property; as it can be designed without the requirement of any professional background, unlike a web page (Blackstone *et al.*, 2007). This, in fact, could explain its high popularity among educators as a teaching tool. Different studies have been conducted on the possible uses of blogging in the classroom, concluding that educational blogging was received favourably (Arena and Jefferson, 2008). Indeed, different studies have suggested that blogging has had a positive resonance amongst ESL learners (Trajtemberg and Yiakoumetti, 2011). This, in fact, can be attributed to many sensible reasons. Firstly, blogging offers a virtual space for communication and additional language practice to that provided by the traditional classroom environment (Blackstone *et al.*, 2007). This affordance or feature expands time and space for learners to learn according to their own pace and during their leisure time. Not only that, it is also a space that contains the line of communication in a single place; therefore, everyone can make sense of the discussed themes/issues (Arena and Jefferson, 2008). This could be useful for both bloggers (being insiders) and the teacher/researcher (being outsiders to the blog) to facilitate assessment, reflection or observation. This is critically important when using blogs for teaching purposes given the fact that it could serve as a non-intimidating, 'non-invasive' observation tool for both educators and researchers (Suzuki, 2004), thus yielding authentic texts for research analysis. Additionally, it offers the opportunity to practise 'higher order thinking' skills that require the manipulation of information in an innovative way rather than merely restating knowledge (Arena and Jefferson, 2008). As such, posting entries in blogs has the potential to promote reflection, analysis, discussion,

and synthesis. Furthermore, Suzuki (2004) perceives that a particular strength in blogging is that it gives the learners the true sense of dialogue and conversation in the educational context which gave them a chance to exercise their voice over time.

Caveats

Despite the positive attributes of blogging, several concerns do exist. Indeed, there are two reported major difficulties: management and collaboration. As far as management is concerned, integrating blogs into classroom practice can be tiring and require extensive work on the part of the teacher (Levy, 2009). Language improvement depends on designing effective tasks and activities that could make learning efficient. On the other hand, tasks that are already in use in the curriculum have to be adapted to suit the nature of online open forums, to any change of rhetorical demands, thus changing the content of the assignment. This relates to issues of plagiarism which ESL students are likely to commit resulting from lack of awareness on who owns the ideas developed in a blog. This also means that affordances of technology and blogging cannot be of significance unless teaching tools are well designed. In fact, Levy's work has indicated this to a degree. In his work, he compared the performance of two groups of students; one worked with blogs and the second did not. His experimental study concludes that both groups showed approximately the same results in language learning. Lin *et al*. (2014) took the same approach, see Table 2.3, insomuch as to be sceptical about the possible role given to blogs. What these studies nonetheless suggest is that blogging does not impede learning nor progress in performance. Additionally, in both studies, blogs were treated as virtual classrooms to upload materials, submit tasks, and provide feedback, with no attempt to exploit other differing affordances of blogs. This is in fact an issue of conducting experimental studies in such environments. To make progress cannot be controlled under certain conditions, as done in Levy and Lin *et al.*'s studies. It has to harness students underlying abilities to learn autonomously. In other studies, blogs were successfully used in promoting students' abilities for critical literacy as in Xie and Sharma (2005), blogs as resources as in Bloch's (2007), which is briefed in Table 2.3. Therefore, it can be concluded that while the merits of using blogs can be

identified; it is in the end a medium that can be used both effectively and less effectively.

resource	Main focus	Contribution	Methodology
Lin *et al*., (2014)	Blogging for teaching writing	Lin *et al*. argue that blogging is not necessarily highly effective as has been claimed by many studies. They substantiated their argument by comparing results of writing skills between two groups in which one got to do activities on a blog and the second through traditional classroom teaching. The result concluded that both have improved in their performance significantly, with no significant difference.	Taiwan, University, ESL major, Experimental study, Pre- and post-tests, experimental group (two lectures of 50 minutes per week on writing, blogging in free time), both groups received course requirements.
Harwood (2010)	Blogging- teaching grammar	This study reports integration of blogs in curriculum to investigate its pedagogic implications in teaching of grammar. It concludes that integrating blogs maximised student-centred learning, increased time spent on revising grammar, and motivated students.	Singapore, University, 10 students. Action study, blogging buddy and blogging group, teacher blog and comment. Methods: survey (mainly), analysis of blog entries (generally to see any change in grammar)
Fellner and Apple (2006)	Blogging and Fluency in writing-	This work reports blended learning of tasks completed both in class and on CALL. They compared word frequency of students' writings pre- and post- blogging. They found a 350 % increase in word count. Additionally, word level and complexity increased.	Japan, University, 21 low proficient participants, 7-day intensive English course (5.30 hours per day).
Kerawalla *et al.* (2008)	Blogging- teaching framework	This study reports an empirically grounded framework for use of blogging in class. It reports six essential factors for blogging: 1- perceptions and need for audience. 2- perceptions and the need for community. 3- utility of and need for comments. 4- presentational style of the blog content. 5- technological context. 6- pedagogical context.	UK, University, Master level. 15 participants, Semi-structured interviews (on students' perceptions and needs), use of blog (optional)
Amir *et al*. (2011)	Blogging- Perceptions and uses	This study examined the perceptions of ESL students when blogging is integrated in writing course. Students post tasks based on syllabus, and receive comments by lecturers and peers (nature of comments are not clarified: feedback or on content). Then reported their perceptions to researchers (this	80 EFL students, Mixed method study (quantitative and qualitative data), survey questionnaire and content analysis,

		is not clarified as interviews or not). Questionnaires were used to collect data about general use of blogs and internet. It concludes that blogs can be used as dashboard for writing.	
Williams and Jacobs (2004)	Blogs- perceptions	This work aims to investigate the use of blogs as space for sharing and discussion learning materials. It reports that a large number of participants were hesitant to participate in blogging experiences, yet generally students' replies to the questionnaire indicates that blogging was seen as assisting learning, collaboration and interactivity.	Australia, Higher Education, Exploratory study, 51 participants, 2 courses, Online questionnaire, discussions through blog entries (no specific tasks given, students choose what to blog), 5 entries grant students 5 marks.
Ahluwalia *et al.* (2011)	Blogging- perception	This study aims to unfold the experiences of students when blogging is integrated. It reveals favourable attitude for using blogs for self-presentation, communication, reading others' blog, and commenting on peers' works.	India, 42 College level, one semester long, 50 minutes tutorial session. Task: blog activity to read and comment on a peer. Methods: survey questionnaire and selected interviews
Noytim (2010)	Blogging- Perceptions	This work examines student perceptions and attitudes of using blogs. Results show that blogs were perceived as a tool for developing self-expression, expanding audience, promoting criticality, and supporting social interactions.	Thailand, University, content analysis of questionnaire, blogs are not analysed
Miyazoe and Anderson (2010)	Blogging- perceptions	This study explores the effectiveness of three different modes of online writing (forum, blog, wiki) simultaneously. The researchers argue that there had not been a detailed examination of learning outcomes. It indicates positive perceptions of the blended course. Text analysis shows progress to differentiate English writing styles.	Tokyo, University, 61 students, Exploratory study, Blended learning course, methods: survey, interviews, text analysis
Sun (2010)	Oral diary blog for teaching English – Perceptions	This study considers the potential blog in teaching English. Participants are required to keep an oral diary on blogs. It indicates that students staged their blogging (conceptualisation, brainstorming articulation, monitoring, and evaluation). Students perceived blogging as a means of learning, self-presentation, sharing of information and networking.	Taiwan, College, 46 participants divided into two groups. One blog for whole group. Tasks and materials: lecture, video, role play, class discussion, 15 voice blog and 5 voice response to peers.

			Method: retrospective interview, questionnaire
Boling (2008)	Perception of technology (Blogs, instant messages, 3D chat) integration	This work looked at the role of integrating new technology in literacy education. It reports many tasks that teacher can create to involve learners in tasks genuinely.	3rd and 5th grade students, task: participate in blog (to respond to each other)
Blackstone *et al.* (2007)	Blogging – attitudes	The authors of this study are optimistic about use of blog to expand learning opportunities outside classroom; however, their study only focused on students' attitude when peer collaboration is used prior to publishing entries. It indicated that students held positive attitudes towards this experience.	Attitudinal survey, 2 semesters, 11 classes, 145 students, Japan.
Bloch (2007)	Blogging- L2 writing	This study reports on integrating blogs in L2 writing course of plagiarism with one African student. Student's response to different tasks by writing blog entries. Analysis indicates that blogs can create a sense of belonging to the community and opportunity for critical dialogue.	One Somali immigrant Student, University level, US Content analysis of blog entries
McIntosh (2015)	Blogging for providing feedback on texts	McIntosh shares different tasks that he used to integrate blogging to classroom tasks. He argues that it is not about technology but pedagogy: 'marriage' of classroom practices and blog. Students were invited to comment and leave constructive feedback on their peers' written works, then other teachers were invited to comment on blog entries. This offered an alternative systematic assessment opportunity rather than traditional paper ones which are centred around teachers.	School, 3 classes of different levels, students create and write blogs on different tasks (reflect, share good writing)

Table 2.3: Studies of Blogs in Education

In terms of e-collaboration on blogs, it is also a matter that is of concern in traditional classroom settings. Online collaborative efforts are described as deliberately cautious. Homik and Melis (2015) noted that students kept their participation to the minimum, merely fulfilling basic requirements. This low level of communication and collaboration has also been reported in many studies such as Krause's (2005), Divitini *et al.*'s (2005), Xie and Sharma's (2005) and Kerawalla *et al.*'s (2008) studies. It is, again, the same argument that

collaboration is not a built-in feature in the software application; it is something extended if the teacher intends to focus on it. As such, it provides different responses to and forms of collaboration compared to a traditional setting.

In response to the two aforementioned areas, namely management and collaboration, teachers should be mindful to optimise their students' learning experiences through educational blogs. Van Lier (1996) constructs stages for technology integration in the classroom, one is presenting support that is challenging and demanding to students, in which, micro-tasks, such as rationalising, and training for technology are essential. This can ensure students maximise their involvement in tasks. Also, a critical point in creating spatial collaborative forums is fostering socialization among the bloggers and their 'audience' (Irwin and Berge, 2015) which can be approached in two manners. One area a teacher should promote is the development cognitive skills such as criticality, creativity and ongoing communication as was suggested by Burgess (2006) who places these skills at the heart of effective blogging in classrooms. Another area can be 'team journaling,' as suggested by Andrusyszyn and Davie (2007). Team journaling is a journal constructed by a group of students collaboratively. Similarly, Bloch (2007) suggests collating all class blogs in one space instead of having individual blogs in order to optimise any interaction within a group of learners. Another thing a teacher can do is to raise the students' awareness of the possible uses of blogs; what to write and how to write it. In fact, Divitini *et al*.'s (2005) study has identified factors related to the lack of participants' awareness of the uses of blogs as learning tools and how to establish a suitable level of writing.

It is a matter of needs and goals setting of the blogger in order to enact each and every possible use of blogs educationally. This can take insights from evidence provided from the works of, for instance, Arena and Jefferson (2008) or in Xie and Sharma (2005) where blogging was used as a tool to practise 'higher-order thinking' skills. Blogs in Xie and Sharma were used with doctoral students whose level of study requires them to heighten the quality of their published works. Hence, criticality and creativity were their priority prior to

publishing on blogs. Apparently, blogging only gave space for publication and made it critical for them to accomplish their needs.

2.4.1.5 A rationale for placing genre at the heart of this study

Finally, in relation to the focus of the current study, there is scant research that focuses on issues that initially emerged with genre such as: investigating audience (this will be viewed later in separate section), a writer's sense of writing or textual rhetorical aspects. Additionally, most of the cited research studies depended on reporting either students' perceptions or using blogging as treatment in experimental studies; giving no space for exploring other important aspects relating to the analysis of the textual nature of blog entries such as the identity of the writer, the process of writing or linguistic aspects. Such focus, I believe, is central to modern teaching of writing to acknowledge and understand experience of blogging in ESL and how best to utilise that in ESL teaching settings.

To sum up, this section has aimed to provide an overview of different approaches to teaching writing: product approach, process approach, content approach, and genre. It can be seen that all of the different approaches vary in their focus for teaching starting from grammatical and rhetorical chunks of language (product), then focus on writer (in process and genre), after that on the reader (genre) and finally the context (genre). The fact that genre acknowledges the different features that contribute to shaping a text makes it more varied and could be responsive to different learners and contexts. Due to the emphasis on context, the reader is naturally seen as part of the writing process resulting in writing an 'authentic' text that reflects the writer's purpose and addresses an authentic audience with a genuine need to read any given text.

2.5 Authentic Tasks

There have been a number of recent discussions about authenticity as part of the epistemology of online spaces in education. In a United States study that focused on adults, better achievement was reported in both reading and writing when using complex texts and more engagement in out-of-school reading and

writing (Purcell *et al*., 2013). A subsequent study by Purcell *et al*. (2013) on the authenticity of literacy activities utilised procedural texts which suggested that authentic activities are related to higher results in both comprehension and writing. A third example comes from a study by Scott *et al*. (2012) which focused on authentic tasks and the autonomy of the learners to carry out an open enquiry with the use of technology. The study showed that there was an enhancement in learners' performance in descriptive writing when they write about first-hand encounters/experiences. These studies confirm that writing skills can be enhanced with the inclusion of authentic tasks in teaching.

For online writing in ESL context, authentic tasks are created from an understanding of writing as a social act to extend messages for readers: who could be a second language reader, or a first language reader. Authentic tasks are real-life types of writing (Duke *et al*., 2006), which are purposely written to achieve a particular need: to socialise, to express oneself, or to ask for help. They are characterised as purposeful, transferring genuine information and addressing real audience/ readers. These views are rooted from views of writing as social artefacts. Such texts are rooted in genres of stories, comic books, scrapbooks, poems, journalistic stories, letters (for instance, to get a loan from a bank), text messages, shopping list, or giving directions to a stranger.

In designing authentic tasks, there should be certain features of the tasks that allows them to be real for learners. Reeves *et al*. (2002) relate an authentic task as having three characteristics. Firstly, there are elements related to the task itself. Tasks should be relevant to the real world of the learner and the learning environment. The task should be open to interpretation. Consequently, learners can understand and respond to it in different ways. There is no one ideal or correct answer. Indeed, this paves the way for creativity and expression of oneself and one's inner voice in every task. Essentially, this will allow participants to approach the task from different perspectives. Secondly, there are attributes linked to task completion. The task should be complex, requiring a period of time and may need the learner to deconstruct the task into smaller stages. It is also expected that learners consult various resources and work

collaboratively. Finally, after completion of the task, reflection is central to enable learners to understand the process and the results achieved. In this sense, learning is a continuous process that revolves not only around time spent on completing the task in the classroom, but also requires continuous reflection and evaluation.

One issue that stems from authenticity is the demand for effective tools that mediate authenticity in ESL contexts. One issue is that L2 learner writers cannot reach a community of readers due to a lack of 'Englishness' in their contexts. Thus, lacking such community disrupts the meaning of authenticity even when practising perceived authentic genres such as letters, articles, directions or comics. This issue is not insurmountable as discussed previously in affordances of technology which can play a mediatory role in bringing authentic readers and contexts to remote ESL contexts. Another issue relates to Reeves *et al*.'s (2002) constructs for authentic task; Lifting (1992) reports that students faced challenges with high-order interpretive essay questions. This is in fact associated with the need for exposure to authentic materials prior to writing authentically. A demand that results in writing being delayed until students are well engaged with and exposed to materials similar to that which they are supposed to write about.

2.6 Theory of Audience

An understanding of audience means a writer views any texts as having an active reader and this understanding is part of producing text as a meaning making activity. For instance, the views of Bakhtin – discussed earlier – contend that there is an intended addressivity when composing. Nonetheless, text is not the end of the composition. In his ground-breaking book: *Is There a Text in this Class*, Fish (1980) argues for the critical role of the reader in the process of making sense of texts. In fact, a text cannot be a text unless the act of interpretation is engaged with by the reader. In ESL contexts, issues of audience have been extended as part of instruction or rhetorical demands, depending on the way teaching is approached. As discussed earlier in approaches of teaching writing, thinking about the reader is implicit in the way writing is taught. Perhaps, this has resulted in a lack of pedagogy and explicit

thinking about ‘audience’ in ESL teaching contexts (Cheng, 2005). This section highlights various issues related to audience theory: definition, scope and views, writer-reader relation in text, and audience-oriented interactional strategies.

Two perspectives on thinking about audience while writing have been advanced: audience-addressed theory and audience-invoked theory. Ede and Lunsford (1984) clarify that audience addressed is “those actual or real-life people who read a discourse” (p.156), and audience invoked is “the audience called up or imagined by the writer” (p. 160). These theories consider audience as an intended or imagined reader during the composition process assuming the first stems entirely from the perspectives and thoughts of the writer, whilst the second assumes that knowing a reader can and may have an influence on the text. In line with the first view, Lillis (2001) considers the theory of ‘addressivity’ as having a continuous internal dialogue/ conversation with someone or a thought in order to make meaning through language. As such a mentally created ‘audience’ does not only have an initial influence on the text, but also continually affects composition throughout the writing process. This shows that writing is viewed as a cognitive process where decisions related to the reader are taken in the mind of the writer in isolation from the actual readers. Cognitive researchers of the role of audience for the writer have thus tended to understand audience by using think-aloud protocols as a means of accessing a writer’s thoughts about the notional reader (as seen in works of Flower and Hayes, 1981).

On the other hand, views of audiences as invoked can be aligned with writing in social contexts and influenced by views of sociocultural theory of learning. For instance, Huettman puts ‘audience’ as “individuals who influenced the writer’s decisions, but who may not have actually read any part of the report” (1996: 260), in an attempt to represent the real reader existing in life. In what seems to stem from the post-structural views of ‘audience’, it is more about the power relationship in a text. As such, a text is interpreted as constructing self and dialoguing with others. McKenna (2005) views audience as an existing power relationship between the addressor and the addressee in the text in

terms of what is written and how it is written. Partly, this indeed provides useful insights into the reality of teaching writing in the classroom where teachers are not only the ultimate reader of the texts; they also exercise power over it. An important issue emerges – a teacher's values and demands may shape the text and its content. This runs the danger that students could never think of the reader as anyone other than the teacher.

Thirdly, audience was seen as linguistically represented in texts, thus becoming a textual feature which is recognised through certain linguistic choices. For example, addressing the reader as 'you'. Views on 'audience' as imagined are seen as helping to formulate linguistically and stylistically appropriate texts (Scheidt, 2006). Furthermore, decisions about 'audience' are seen as influencing the tone and style of the written texts (Denne-Bolton, 2013). This indeed has a dramatic influence on teaching writing. Instructions in books and sometimes in studies which investigated audience seem to take this perspective by demanding that writers might imagine particular readers to write for. In doing so, this insinuates that the reader is only influenced by his/her internal imagined cognitive repertoire in composition. This creates a gap between writing in reality and makes writing a phoney act where conditions are invented, and texts are based on unreal aim for communication.

Certainly, the concept of 'audience' when writing can be confusing. The line between the real reader, as being a teacher or a critical friend, and an imagined one as in the task criteria is hard to draw when involved in writing. Each kind of audience encrypts a specific influence and triggers a specific selection of textual moves or strategies. However, the varying range of influences has rarely been seen as important to report. Studies that investigated students' attention on the teacher as readers of texts indicated that while there is a varying level of attention given to the reader, how a teacher is perceived is not focussed upon.

Thus, 'audience' as a concept in the mind is fluid and active. It is fluid in the terms that there cannot be assumed prior knowledge of what the writers think of their readers or even if they think of them at all. As such, it is active in the

mind of the composers. It is in the inner mind of the writer, yet there are innumerable outer social factors that play a role in constructing what it means to have a particular audience. Thus, it is imperative not only to investigate 'audience' as a classroom-specific entity but also outside the classroom environment, not least because writing for the classroom can be 'schooled' and shaped by socially constructed ideas of what 'good' writing is and also by specific marking criteria.

The idea of 'audience' is therefore, to a great extent, socially embedded in the intercommunication existing in the writer-reader relationship (whether truly happening in the reality of a known and actual reader or mentally imagined). It is a 'subjective' construct existing personally in the mind and 'intersubjective' being constructed outwardly while composing. Further, exploration of 'audience' is closely associated with self-image and addresses issues of personal agency. This involves how writers see themselves in the world and negotiate their own relationships through their own perspectives, which requires an understanding of internal questions and their projection or omission in the tangible world (tangible when represented in writing).

Moreover, the concept of 'audiencing strategies' has rarely been seen as important to report. Only few studies (Cheng, 2005; Ross, 2014) have revealed what strategies the writers consider as important when writing academic texts. There is insufficient focus on readers outside classroom context. Ross's (2014) study – for instance – showed a mixture of strategies that students adopted in completing their reflections to adapt to both the teacher and the assessment criteria. Similarly, Cheng's (2005) study concluded that students adopt strategies in order to address the beliefs about what matters for the teacher in the task equally with task demands when they are required to address an artificial rhetorical 'audience'. It is not clear as to what is seen or evaluated as an 'audience' in the reader. Yet what is clear is that the students saw themselves in a relationally less agentic role, which needs a further exploration. Also, strategies to address a public reader (i.e. in blogs) were not given proper attention in literature. Additionally, 'audiencing strategies' are considered as located in the actions and thoughts of human beings; which includes the student

writer, teachers, peers, parents and wider norms about writing quality. Hence, it is assumed that the writer attempts to address a reader by inventing 'audiencing strategies'. To address this, it is important to look not only at the audience (i.e. teacher, blogger) but also at the context and any other influencing factor on the text as part of 'managing an audience.' In other words, not only is the actual reader important but also the relational link between reader and writer.

Additionally, addressing 'audience' represents an elusive construct which is difficult to pin down and generalise about. It is perhaps rather strategy specific to writers themselves involving their knowledge, previous experience, best skills, as was concluded by Berkenkotter's (1981) study. He does not only conclude that a strong link exists between a sense of audience and the writers' prior rhetorical training, but he also gives examples which construct knowledge about readers on the basis of the writers' prior knowledge. This indicates that characteristics of audience can be – by and large – seen through the lens of the writer whose identity is formed through differing experiences. This suggests the importance of classroom training and practice in order to effectively orient texts to different readers. In another study, audience awareness was linked with working memory use (Alamargot *et al.*, 2011), showing a link between ability to negotiate content with 'audience' and the cumulative knowledge and mental retrieval process of the writer. Although these aspects are not easy for a teacher to monitor and look for while teaching in an ESL context, the teacher nonetheless has a role in featuring and forming experiences and knowledge about audience inside classroom.

2.6.1 A rationale for placing audience at the heart

On the face of it, introducing a variety of prospects of 'audience' into the classroom carries promising advancement in teaching – particularly because the view of the global reader is not well explored in relation to the development of a text. This calls into question whether the 'audience' being hidden (that is not face-to-face) is perceived as more severe or more lenient than the clearly defined one. This is in fact, in response to Arena and Jefferson's (2008) views that blogging opens up a space for practising voice for shy students. Those

students, as assumed by Arena and Jefferson, would feel more comfortable blogging for the unseen audience. Yet, this could be tricky as it may create ambiguity regarding the nature of audience and, consequently, confusion for the blogger. This concern is revealed in Kerawalla *et al*.'s (2008) study that reported differing students' behaviours in relation to audience: some felt motivated to publish all course activities due to the idea of having an 'audience', others only wanted to view comments on their mini essays, and others were not at all interested with idea of having an online audience. The study could only suggest that clarity about audience can sometimes be motivating for some learners. Also, it suggests that those who fear exposure do exhibit a certain level of awareness about audience, generating thoughts about audience-as-invoked and imagined.

Though audience is authentically addressed in blogs; still it did not receive adequate attention across genres that have different audiences such as e-diaries and e-essay, see Table 2.4. It is admitted that part of identifying the diary genre is its self-addressiveness (Cucu-Oancea, 2013; Paperon, 2004); yet this has not yet received sufficient focus in the field of ESL, as is also the case regarding electronic essays. Additionally, a cross-comparison of audience in the three online genres is not pedagogically addressed. There are of course many examples that discussed audience in writing different essays in classroom. However, it is certainly illuminating for ESL teachers, particularly, to see the effect of differing audiences on their students and be able to compare classroom essays with diaries written for personal use and blogs written for public.

Study	Main focus	Main contribution	Methodology
Ross (2014)	Audience and reflective texts (written for assessment)	This study investigates the three audiences (teacher, assessment criteria, others) that are considered when completing reflective writing. It concludes that the more learners consider their audience when composing, the less their texts tend to be authentic.	UK, higher education, qualitative study, interview and written texts of participants.

Kuhi *et al.* (2014)	Awareness of Audience, essay	This study explored the effects of audience raising awareness on use of interpersonal resources in essay. Students were introduced to seven modes of essays (narration, description, classification, division, compare and contrast). The results indicate that raising awareness of audience is influential in meta discourse use of EFL students.	Iran, 20 EFL learners, upper intermediate level of English language proficiency. Random experimental and control groups. Treatment is seven sessions (instructions of writing), used Hyland's (2005) typology of meta discourse analysis.
McDermott and Kuhn (2011)	Audience- oral presentations	This study integrated audience-directed tasks in learning. Participants were required to give oral report to peers. They were required to complete two written tasks: one directed to 4th grade students (to explain a particular issue), as well as reflecting about the course to their academic advisor in informal letter. The survey indicates that participants appreciated the experience and writing to a particular audience was focused upon.	College Qualitative action research, 28 participants, one-course long, semi-structured survey
Alamargot *et al.* (2011)	Audience-working memory (cognitive ability)	This work investigated the relationship between working memory and the ability to adapt text to audience. It indicates that high working memory did lead students to use different strategies to explore the visual sources. This led to longer writing pauses and more awareness of audience.	France, 25 graduate students, Record of eye movement
Carvalho (2002)	Audience awareness-cognitive development	This study explores the use of procedural facilitation strategy to promote audience focused writing. Carvalho argues that audience is a crucial element of writing, yet it cannot be done before the writer reaches a level of cognitive development. So, he used external aids to cue audience in	Portuguese, used procedural facilitator (external aids to support writing), Quasi-experimental, 5th and 9th grade, two groups: control and

		experimental group. Results indicate significant progress in writing appropriately for communicative acts, use of qualifiers and reference point, and were more audience directed.	experimental. 6 weeks
Thompson (2001)	Audience is textual	His works identified set of discoursal features to write for audience; audience is perceived as reader-in-the text by use of readers' views to contradict them. Also, there are lexicon-grammatical elements that indicate audience. However, students reports were not referenced in their selection of textual moves.	Novice writers
Schindler (2001)	Audience (imagined)-collaborative writing	This study utilises computer game as the task for participants to complete. The task directed the learners to investigate particular audience implicitly. It concludes that audience is viewed in varied ways: abstract (non-existing), or concrete (real characteristics are assigned to it)	Germany, University, 16 groups (of two), videotaped interaction
Cheng (2005)	Audience strategies-writing process	This work aims to investigate the representation of audience in the writing process. It looked at how writing is adapted to the assigned audience of raising awareness of audience. Proficiency in language is positively associated with capability to analyse and make inferences about the particular audiences.	Case study, EFL college students, Taiwan, students are given task (that have prompts) to write, one semester writing instruction. Discourse-based interview, think aloud protocol. Text analysis based on audience coding scheme of Hays *et al.* (1988).
Huettman (1996)	Audience in business text is powerful.	This work examines how audience is considered in a business context. It attempted to draw on audience theory and	30-month case study,

		discuss whether it supports audience in real life writings. It concludes that clients' needs are perceived as the foremost effective factor to consider when completing a report. There are other factors which can affect decisions on audience such as finance and credibility.	One business writer, analysis of written reports
Berkenkotter (1981)	Audience-Diary	This study aims to investigate whether previous training in thinking about audience can be transparent in written works. Participants are given a task to describe career choice to High School. It was found out that being audience-sensitive depends on different factors: previous rhetorical training on audience, perception of composition task, and choice of discourse.	Experienced writers, think-aloud protocol, controlled laboratory situation, Flower and Hay's for classifying audience.
Kerawalla *et al.* (2008)	Blogging framework	This study reports an empirically grounded framework for use of blogging in class. It reports six essential factors for blogging: 1- perceptions and need for audience. 2- perceptions and the need for community. 3- utility of and need for comments. 4-presentational style of the blog content. 5-technological context. 6-pedagogical context.	UK, University, Mater level. 15 participants, Semi- structured interviews (on students' perceptions and needs), use of blog (optional)
Mewburn and Thomson (2013)	Academic blog as tool for audience	This study aims to explore how academics attempt to access a wide audience through blogs. It concludes that academics discuss issues like conditions and policy of academic work and information sharing. It concludes that blogs offer a space for directing content to real HE staff.	100 academic blogs, Content analysis

McGrail and Davis (2011)	Audience-Blogging	Their experimental study explores different themes: voice, connections and relationships, thinking and creativity. The study helped promote participants' mindfulness and connectedness to their audience. The participants exercised agency (which implied positive outcomes). Additionally, they learned to take ownership of the writing process. Their conversations were less accurate yet more humorous and playfulness. Meaning and communicating ideas was important.	Elementary level (5th grade), experimental (pre- and post-samples of blogs), Quantitative data analysis
Xie and Sharma (2005)	Audience-Blogging as open space for composition	This study examined the experience of students who kept blogs during a course. According to participants' reports, they felt a sense of belonging to a wider community than classroom context. The open nature of blogs pushed them to be creative and critical. On the other hand, for the same reasons, other bloggers felt stressed and cognitively overloaded in order to perform adequately.	Phenomenological study, Higher Education, 9 doctoral graduate participants, interviews

Table 2.4: Studies on Audience in Education

Regarding audiencing strategy, there are no clear guiding principles of how to address 'audience', in the academic texts, due to the lack of immediate or original audience in the texts that have been investigated: the class-based ones. Even at the level of authentic audience in classrooms, strategies of consciously writing to audience are not looked at in depth. It is not clear what strategies young writers use in order to write for a particular audience. Hence, writer-reader interaction in text needs further exploration particularly in ESL contexts.

2.7 Conclusion and Research Questions

To conclude, a more complete understanding of audience needs to be achieved and clearly aligned to a particular line of thought about writing development.

The dilemma for the teaching of English writing in the second language has been exacerbated by adding technological load in which the teachers need to be pedagogically prepared to teach appropriate addressivity. To do so, they need to understand basic concepts such as audience or they will keep their same practices of teaching without giving weight to the available affordances. And so, currently the only concern and change while using technology is on how to use technology. When technical concerns override pedagogical ones, technology is unlikely to accelerate language learning. It is clearly important to examine the benefits and limitations of technology use, with some foresight as to when the software, hardware or online material may become obsolete.

This chapter has presented an overview of theories that underlie investigating both off line and in-line audience in relation to different genres. The main trends in teaching writing in Higher Education have been highlighted with the aim of paving the way to understanding the context of teaching writing in ESL. The focus on these different approaches to teaching academic writing is considered essential to understand why students concentrate on particular rhetorical, linguistic, or social functions when composing their online texts. It is essential to bear in mind that writing in second language can be source of struggle for learners. As such some learners may tend to excessively focus on linguistic accuracy at the expense of communicative effectiveness due to individual inefficiencies or previous learning experiences.

Additionally, this literature review has attempted to present studies on the topic of addressing a particular readership in blogging, writing a diary and writing academic essay. While academic essays are considered the commonest example of tasks given in traditional context of ESL, both blogs and diary are examples of alternative texts for practising writing either for academic or non-academic purposes. The significance of analysing and comparing audience in both local and global contexts of writing is to understand the effects of teacher-in-the-text (being an audience), and texts that are free from teachers' 'pressure'. Some teachers may emphasise accuracy, which then shape texts in a particular way and perhaps constrains creativity of students. Blogging being an open window to countless number of viewers and commenters encourages

free expression and may downplay the need for grammatical accuracy, offering opportunities to explore audience. However, blogs cannot be taken for granted as completely effective as they are popularised in the literature. This is because of the danger of the unseen interlocutor, which is highlighted to the learner participants in the current study, as part of research ethics (see section 3.1.3).

As this chapter comes to its end, it is important to highlight that the reality of English writing in the L2 worlds is a complicated matter. Many factors work in tandem to influence the formalization of a written text. Writing is no longer seen as mono one-way text production; it is a culturally-situated activity through which the writers impose their identities consciously or unconsciously to communicate content to a reader. Different factors play an interchangeable role in defining what 'writing' is in the era of English writing that is mediated by the world through technology.

Because writers are not always separated from their readers, the 'audience' contribute to differences in texts. This interrelationship between the reader-writer should not be assumed to be a straightforward one, as the concept of 'audience' also adds complexity to the teaching where the teacher plays a multi-'audience' role: seen either as the ultimate recipient of a text because the writers think only about correction criteria and task requirements, or secondly as a supporter in performance. Because the teacher is supposed to judge and mark, it is likely that – particularly in summative work – the teacher is taken as the first type of audience. In such cases, text writing becomes far from a communicative and authentic act. This goes against the recent models and theories of teaching writing.

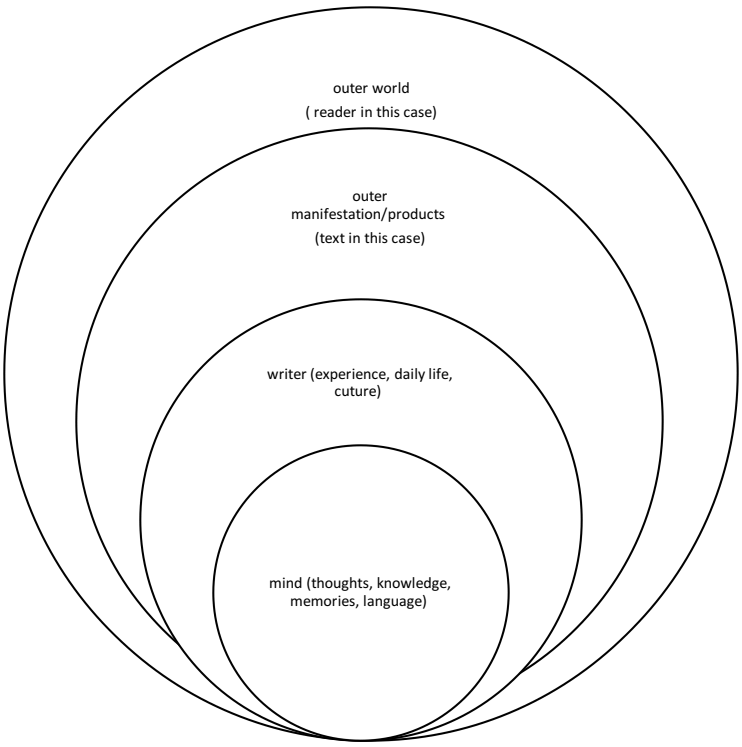


Figure 2.3: Interrelation between Writer, Text and Audience

As depicted in Figure 2.3, as the writer moves through the domains there is a risk of detachment from the core. How can 'the outer world' be reached without losing a sense of authenticity from the writer's core? The teacher and pedagogical choices in ESL can help in providing students with the tools to move between these boundaries. Therefore, I have designed this study to explore genre-based approaches to understand if such an approach has the potential to bridge this gap by providing greater emphasis on the interrelationships between the four circles.

If 'writing' is deprived of any meaningful purpose, and unclear in the L2 context, then what role does a learner 'writer' play? There is a need to explore the identities that learners see themselves taking when writing a 'text' that is directed either to a teacher or a text that is directed to non-teacher audience.

All these issues present dilemmas to the current position of 'writing' in the ESL context. There is a need to take the affordances of technology forward beyond their basic conceptualisation to look closely at the social contexts so that the

affordances can be employed in a meaningful way. There are unanswered issues in relation to less experienced ESL writers' conceptualization of their own writing both for the immediate existing reader and for the unseen audience. This raises questions as to the degree to which the teacher influences the academic texts written inside classrooms. Moreover, there is a need to understand the influence of the political context in which learning takes place and as such its influence on the ways writers construct and think of their writing – as a process and as a product.

There is a need to close the gap in viewing the 'authentic reader' as part of the concept of 'audience', as audience is usually taught in ESL classrooms as sub-topic of 'writing' and presented in the rubrics of essay writing. All of these bookish instructions differ from writing genuinely to a reader; from L2 novice writer to L1 expert reader. I believe that directing content towards genuine authentic writing should be at the heart of teaching L2 writing; hence, there is a considerable gap between understandings and actual use of the concept 'audience' in practice.

The issues raised so far have been addressed due to their relevance to the following main research question:

How do ESL low-level writers understand 'audience' while writing in different text types in the Omani Higher Education Context?

The research question is centred around six main sub-questions. These are investigated around stages in which students produce the different texts. Each sub-question is understood through its own approach of data collection and data analysis.

1- *How do they see themselves as writers (Do they think themselves writers? How?)*
2- *What are the major differences and similarities between writing in different genres in terms of process and product?*
3- *Who do the students think their audience is/are? And how do the students shape their text to suit the intended audience?*

4- *What factors influence decisions related to audience? Is there a particular influence of teacher on text? Are there factors related to the political context? Focus on classroom practice*
5- *How do they understand the nature of the text type in relation to audience?*

Additionally, the design of this research is centred around writing freely in everyday life. This made it necessary to approach the ESL writers unobtrusively, which led to introducing technology as a tool for writing. There were indispensable questions in relation to identity in ESL. However, in ESL teaching contexts it is assumed that learners are automatically writers by nature. As a result of these issues in the context, the following sub-question was added:

6- *How can technology support the writing experience of low-level ESL writers?*

Chapter 3:
Methodology

3.1 Background

Following the discussion in the previous chapter, there is an identifiable gap in knowledge in relationship to the novice EFL writers' conceptualization of their own writing either for an immediate existing reader or for the unseen audience. This, indeed, raises questions as to the degree to which the teacher – as the assumed reader – influences the academic texts written inside classrooms. Moreover, there is a need to understand the influence of the social context in which learning takes place and its influence on the ways writers construct and think of their writing – as a process and as a product. Thus, as shown previously, the methodology chapter aims to answer one key question: *How do EFL low-level writers make sense of different readers while writing different text types in the Omani Higher Education Context*?

Additionally, the study not only considers audience but the interaction of audience and genre. Part of the analysis will focus on the texts themselves. These texts will be gathered using technology as the medium of data collection. For this, a question included is: *Can technology support the experiences of composing different texts among ESL low-level writers in Oman*?

The methodology explored in this study seeks to make use of the affordances of mobile phones in addressing various kinds of audience readily available through global communication. In doing so, the present study focuses on both local and global audiences. Specifically, it addresses three audiences: teacher (context/local audience), oneself, and community (public) within an Omani Higher Education institution. The mobile phone creates a facility for adding to a blog or a diary. This facility is linked to disrupting the notion of audience – by interacting with peers in the blog – and the intimacy of the phone supporting self as audience for the diary. As for the academic essay, this makes use of technology as a means of submitting the essay.

Hence, the present study tries to provide a detailed understanding of second language learners' inner perspectives and experiences. As such, this work involves seventeen learners registered on a writing course at CAS higher

education. Seven students are majoring as teachers of English language and ten are specialised in Information Technology. These participants were asked to produce three different kinds of texts as part of the overall design. Each text had a notionally different reader: diaries – self; blogs – peers; and essays – teacher. By setting up different tasks with varying audiences, the difference between texts can be seen. Indeed, the participants also talk about how the texts vary. Together these data aim to bring about a better understanding of real practice in classrooms and the teaching and learning relationships that exist in the writing classroom.

This chapter details both theoretical decisions and practical steps taken throughout the data collection stage. Firstly, the interpretive paradigm is outlined as this forms the philosophical basis of this study. This paradigm takes into account, the situated-ness of this research and an understanding that the findings are particular to the cultural differences and uniqueness of the Omani students working within the culture of a particular institution. In order to ensure that this is achieved, the research foci (i.e., audience, technological affordances and online writing) were always reflected upon while considering methodological decisions. Secondly, there are practical decisions relating to the design and collection of data. The chapter includes a discussion of the thinking that informed the sample, sampling, procedures, collection tools and analysis. Finally, an important element related to participants' rights is discussed with specific reference to issues pertaining to online research.

3.2 Interpretivism

The nature of knowledge in social sciences has often been subject to heated debate. This debate has focused on different philosophical assumptions and different aims, which in turn has often resulted in a tendency to value qualitative and quantitative data differently. This difference of perspective is often cited as an explanation for why each issue of investigation produces different knowledge due to the differences of the investigator, focus, or participants. What mostly matters, however, is producing valuable and useful knowledge to the field of education; and more specifically for the purposes of this study – second language education. Among the different philosophies, interpretivism is seen as the most appropriate paradigmatic perspective for the current study,

given the area of practical knowledge and research gap it seeks to address. As the discussion of interpretivism unfolds, its relevance to the particular context of this study will become clear. This being said, it does not exclude the merits of other philosophical orientations. Indeed, caution is taken about possible shortcomings, which are addressed and discussed as the various research decisions are explained and justified.

The current study is to a significant degree explorative; it aims to understand the experiences of those being researched and, as such, is in line with the key impetus of the interpretive paradigm. It aims to reveal the experience of the living being as much as possible from the internal views of the lived experience. Moreover, as argued by Schwandt (2007:161), beneath any action there are meaningful individual reasons to be discerned. It can be said that this view of knowledge provides conscious explanations of the predispositions held by social human beings about everyday life experiences, emotions, thoughts, and memories. Although this study aims to clarify as much as possible the reality of real life, it is believed that life is too intricate and complex to be put into simple descriptions. Overall, interpretivism is a philosophical perspective that aims to produce knowledge through considering actions as meaningful, individual interactions, contextual understanding, and direct experiences as they are lived, understood and voiced (Morehouse, 2012; O'Donoghue, 2007). Any paradigm contains four aspects: ontology, epistemology, axiology (ethics), and methodology (Creswell and Poth, 2017; Wahyuni, 2012) as will be detailed in this chapter.

In terms of ontology, it is the view about the nature of knowledge (Wahyuni, 2012). Interpretive thinking holds 'relativist' views (Scotland, 2012). More specifically, the claim that different people perceive the world as 'relatively' different; and for this it is essential to capture and show these differences. In fact, understanding, in this sense, is perceived as multiple, not fixed, and as changing over time. This approach values insights into the particular context that are often less explored by more positivist research studies, but have their own cultural specificity that are often left unpublished and un-talked about. Indeed, taking an interpretivist stance to understand humans requires that the

researcher looks at different cultures, educational backgrounds, and social strands which allows them to unpick and scrutinize unclear habits, events, practices, and beliefs. More than that, it allows for accepting and researching the differences of the particular rather than pinning phenomena down to general rules. Interpretivism therefore aims to come extremely close to the lived events; and also sees any single reality as inevitably positioned. As a consequence, typically small populations are studied in-depth with a great amount of detail provided. This allows the researchers to explore areas they have never thought of or expected. There is always a chance that rich data can reveal aspects of the focus that were unexpected.

For interpretivists, reality is not only multiple but also hard to contain through one account. From this perspective it is important not to view reality as one single account to be discovered by the researcher and so likely to be the same, regardless of the researcher and the researched. Rather, reality is constructed differently through different thoughts, and by different thinkers. Thus the researcher is not seen as the only seeing, living and talking interpreter of the matter under investigation. All the multiple beings contribute to it. If, it is argued, any person can detach from his other parts (feelings, accumulative knowledge, experiences), then the knowledge which is produced can be accepted as a single truth. Since that cannot be done, collective views are what constitute ‘truth’ or ‘understanding’. As such understanding the world, or entities of the world, cannot always be explained in only one factual conclusion; instead, it may be necessary to explore a combination of emotions, experiences, perceptions, and views of various individuals so that any phenomena can be understood. Indeed, we construct it and interpret it, and so the purpose of research is to ensure that this interpretation is rigorously undertaken and informed by a careful understanding of the context that produced it.

In terms of epistemology, it is concerned with ways of accessing knowledge. Interpretivists hold views of knowledge as ‘transactional’ and subjective (Wahyuni, 2012). As such, findings like all social truths are constructed and co-constructed (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). In this sense, research findings are deemed to emerge through the process of analysis and the subjective

interpretation of the researcher rather than as an external reality that is discovered by the researcher. Thus the researcher is not representing data to create a truth to suit themselves but is part of the social world in which truth is always socially constructed. Hence, meaning and understanding attached to any experience often stems from inside the experiences of individuals not from external factors.

In terms of methodology, it "identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge of it [reality]" (Krauss, 2005: 759). Therefore, an understanding of 'audience' is attempted in a manner that focuses on both what is directly stated in interviews, and also through analysis of texts. Perhaps what is omitted or hidden or unknown by the writer, but which can be seen in the process of writing or in the product texts can be just as interesting as, if not more so than, relying simply on what is actually projected in the interviews. Also, a clear understanding of how writing tasks are introduced and set up by the teacher is attempted through observation. Drawing on writers' subjective judgements about what they do as they write, together with observations of the classroom contexts in which they were produced and exploring how this is revealed in the texts they produce, will inform a construction of understanding linked to the co-constructed nature of interpretivist epistemology.

All of the aforementioned interpretively-founded thinking about 'audience' will also highlight the need to 'see, ask for, and take examples' about the meaning of writing in an online area, consider what it means for a person (especially a learner) to convey a written work for a particular kind of readership and explore what questions may be raised in their minds. However, this philosophical thought is translated into practice through methodology.

3.2.1 Case Study Methodology

Important decisions related to which methodology to select stem from their fitness for purpose. Within the interpretive framework, there are many methodologies such as action research, case study and ethnography. Regarding decision making for any methodological distinction and selection, Tuli (2010) argues that there is no hierarchy that places any methodology over

another; yet there are grounds for conducting research in a manner that is purposeful and in line with the assumed nature of reality (ontology), nature of knowledge and the relationship between knowledge and seeker of knowledge (epistemology). For this reason, any choice of methodology is influenced by paradigms informing social science research.

Methodology is the "strategy, plan of action, process or design" lying behind the choice and use of particular research methods (Crotty, 1998: 3) including decisions related to the process of extracting and collecting data from people about particular human issues, but also it details each step of the data collection process (Tuli, 2010). Methodology leads to the specific tools for exploring elements of the setting that are referred to as 'Methods'. Crotty defines research 'methods' as "the techniques or procedures used to gather or analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis" (Crotty, 1998: 3). The difference between methodology and method is therefore that methodology is a procedural structure or framework while methods are the tools. Therefore, a method can be used to collect various data, yet the way it is used is mainly influenced by the methodology. This section will outline the methodology and methods of data gathering for the present study.

The present study employs a case study methodology. The nature of case study is a form of inquiry involving a relatively small number of participants with the intention of exploring in considerable detail the various dimensions and aspects of the phenomena. Whatever is considered a case, it has to be a 'bounded unit' (Gerring, 2004; Hamilton, 2011; Miles and Huberman, 1994) that can be any phenomenon (i.e. human beings, events, institutions). A bounded unit implies a boundary to the context being explored and that it is clear what falls inside and outside the case being explored. Additionally, the case should be investigated as occurring within its natural setting (Hamilton, 2011; Hammersley and Gomm, 2009). Indeed, in many examples of case study it is the setting itself that forms the case. When considering a case, the particular phenomena are considered locally in relation to the particular context in which they are occurring. Cases are, in this manner, negotiated and represented from various subjective and internal views, with the potential to yield a deeper

understanding. Yet, the investigation is subjective, i.e., it does not seek to present a case as a single objective reality. This is due to it being constructed from multiple realities and representations within a case, as understood from an interpretive perspective. In other words, when investigating an event, interviews and observations will be conducted with various subjects/participants to gain a more nuanced understanding of the event (if the case of the investigation is an event). Yin (2013: 13) adds to this understanding, by stating a case study "**investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially** when **the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident**…**on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a** triangulating fashion" [emphasis is in the original text]. Yin considers that social phenomena are hard to separate from their real context as in laboratory experiments. It is within this understanding that the context constitutes a fundamental part of the case. Thus, taking the investigation to the naturally occurring context allows the researcher to account for the importance of the local context as influencing the investigated case.

Another characteristic of case study is that it is a particular example of something, which in the present study is a group of writers working together on three writing tasks. The present study considers the interaction between audience and genre mediated by technology platforms as the defining activity within the case study. Therefore, the case study is not only bounded by the cultural and contextual factors of understanding 'audience' – that have been mostly neglected in audience theory and limited in many studies to its being textual representation – but is also an example of an interaction.

Essential to the present case study, Hammersley (2012) emphasizes the need to form a clear understanding of the implicit motives of the participants; it is vital to **understand the overall experience of the participants.** Essentially, understandings about audience are constructed in classrooms. The teacher and the pedagogy employed influence how audience is perceived and the extent to which priority is given to it in writing. This negotiation of meaning in relation to audience will thus represent an important strand explored in this study.

Clearly, there are elements of case study methodology that make it suitable for exploring audience-directed writing. The present study employs two classes as two cases that are **contemporary phenomena**. The investigation focuses on actions and events that happen naturalistically. Additionally, different methods of data collection are utilised yielding different kinds of data. The case is not simply a physical context, but a context chosen because it represents an example of something; i.e. addressing audience. Furthermore, only seventeen participants have been recruited to yield rich data about the two main cases: the two classes. Typical for case studies, data gathered in the present study are to a degree both 'messy' and in-depth (qualitative in nature).

Critiques of case studies have raised some concerns for adopting this methodology; yet these critiques do not devalue the strength of the collected data. Yin (2013) listed two issues in particular: one is lack of rigour; and another is anti-generalisability. Lack of rigour can result from biased researcher views if her/his own judgments are allowed to affect the research. Indeed, this criticism is made by those who believe that objectivity is the defining feature of social science research. However, interpretivists would argue that all analysis is at some level subjective, even that with the intention of being objective. It is only through subjective interpretation that truth has any kind of meaning. Secondly, the claim that results are not generalizable to the wider population (Hamilton, 2011; Yin, 2013). This is attributed to sampling procedures that are not representative of the population. However again, generalisability is not seen as important for interpretivists, rather they advocate the contribution made by a deep understanding of the particular (Hamilton, 2011). An interpretivist would argue that in seeking generalisability research loses sight of how any phenomenon is experienced and enacted.

More recently the case study methodology has gained popularity in social science research. It seems that this methodology has not only been distinctive in the nature of knowledge it produces, but also in its approach to data collection. Firstly, as contended by Hamilton (2011), it could be argued that this methodology is the only one that offers a full account of events or phenomena

that are naturally occurring within a context. As argued by Hamilton, the basic knowledge of human social cases emerges from understanding the multifarious wealth of details in the data of real life contexts. Secondly, Yin (2013) adds that this methodology offers the unique advantage to include various types of evidence ranging from documents, artefacts, interviews and observations.

3.2.1.1 The Case in this Study

In terms of the case studied in the current investigation, the focus is on disentangling the complex relationship between writers and their readers when writing in three different genres in the two individual classrooms. In this sense, elements that are projected by the teacher's instructions or behaviour are observed. This involves direct and indirect instructions such as directly telling them what a text is and its constituents, selecting model texts as examples, or correcting texts. Student understanding is further investigated by student reflections in diary form in order to study how teachers' instructions are understood (transmitted) in the minds of the learners. Following this, a textual representation of their understanding, while writing an academic essay or a blog, is analysed. In addition, the diary will be analysed both in terms of what it reveals about student understanding and as a sample text.

The investigation of multiple meanings (and shades of meaning) in relation to students' understanding of audience in the socio-cultural context of the case classroom makes it essential to utilise different techniques for data collection; specifically, observation, interviews and diary writing. The first method used is observation, which – as asserted by Cohen and Manion (1986:122) – is "at the heart of every case study." Indeed, this technique is particularly useful to explore the academic teaching context where both the teacher and students interact and bond with each other formally and informally. In this sense, observation provides a partial understanding of what audience means for developing writers by exploring how it is mentioned and talked about in class. A second important technique is interview or talking to the writers themselves about what is valued as important when forming texts of different types. This facilitates an understanding of the different factors – both inside the classroom context or outside it – which influence the process of producing texts.

Importantly, as students are connected to each other because of the on-line connectivity of the technology used in this study they may be writing at any given time or place. Thirdly; diary is used for reflection purposes so that the participants tell their experiences of writing. Finally, three different genre of texts are collected to explore how audience is addressed in written examples.

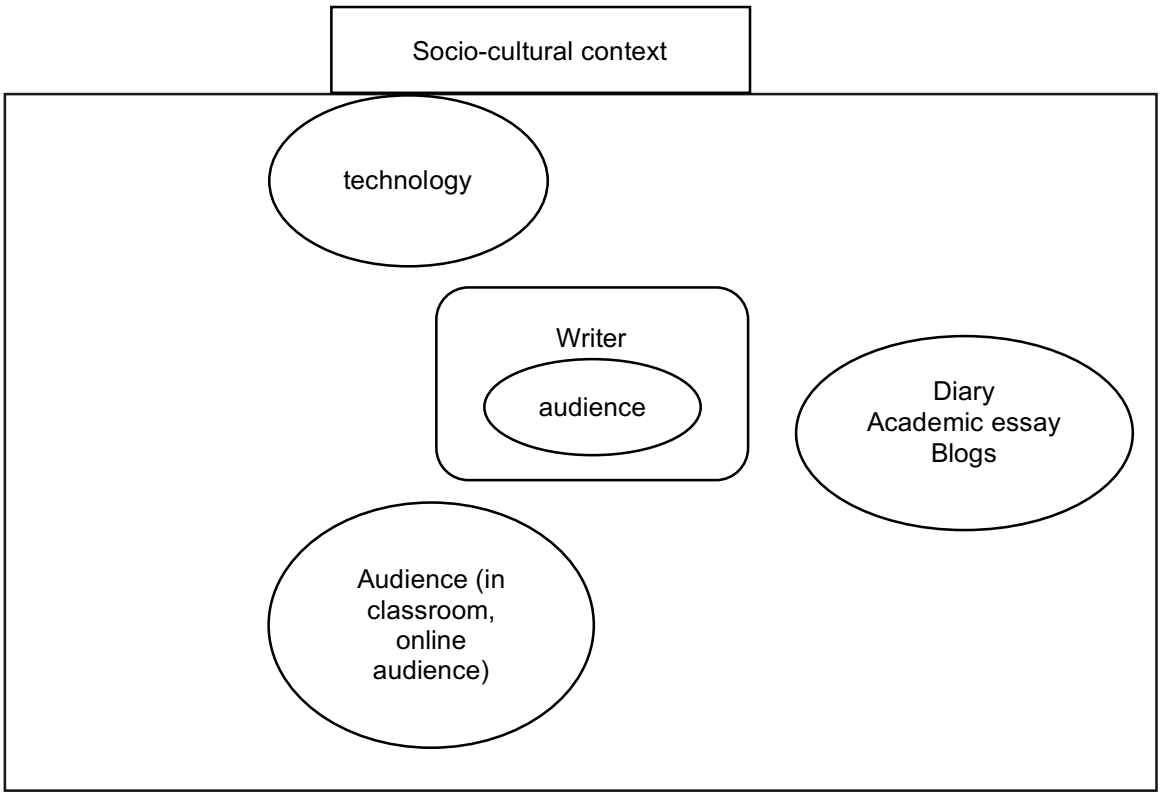


Figure 3.1: Case study of 'Audience,' genre and technology

As a summary, Figure 3.1 shows the multiple elements investigated and their position as researchable elements in the current study. The focus is on audience as disrupted by technology through writing three genre types. The three elements are shown in the figure. The audience-genre-technology nexus allows the researcher to investigate the potential of each genre to bring a specific understanding of audience and practice writing. This figure shows that what can be seen in the texts exists only in the way the writer sees the reader, i.e. conceptualised audience. The conceptualised audience is shown as part of the writer in the centre of the figure. As such, this audiencing technique is separated from what the reader actually perceives as reader perceptions fall beyond the remit of the present study. In this sense, the actual reader can only

have influence on texts similarly to any other external factor in the wider context inasmuch as they are taken into consideration by the writer. Understood in such a way, the three elements of the investigation give importance to contextual factors that affect writers' thinking about the writing process and product. The academic context (including teacher, curriculum, academic agenda, accessibilities) is considered as one contributory part of the socio-cultural context. Consequently, they are investigated by means of writer reflection in a diary.

3.2.1.2 Design of study

As signalled above, the present study relies on collecting three texts – diary, blog, academic essay – to analyse features of audience. Additionally, classroom observation and interviews of both teachers and students were carried out. Table 3.1 links each method with the main research questions (RQ). The table demonstrates that each method was designed to answer different research questions.

Method	**Purpose**	**RQ**
Semi-structured Observation	-To observe teachers contextualizing audience in classroom and how that is echoed in student understanding of audience. - To observe what is taught in classroom -To observe students' reactions to feedback on their academic essays	RQ-6 Role of technology RQ-4 Role of teacher
Diary Writing (D)	To collect data: diary entries	RQ-2 and RQ 3 compare genres
Academic Essay (A)	To collect students' academic essays written for assessment and their reactions to feedback	RQ-2 and RQ 3 compare genres
Semi-structured interview (1)	To elicit students' experience of writing D and A	RQ-1 Define 'writer' RQ-5 Audience of D and A
Blogging (B)	To engage students in writing for other-than-self audience in authentic social context	RQ-2 and RQ 3 compare Genres

Semi-structured interview (2)	To elicit students' experience of B	RQ1- Define 'writer' RQ-5 Audience of B
Group interview	Assessment and final comments to obtain feedback and reflection with two classes	

Table 3.1: Method in relation to RQ and purpose

Figure 3.2: Data collection phases

Figure 3.2 shows the stages in which data are collected, starting with diary writing which continued over the first two main stages. The first two stages took a longer time than the last stage. In the first stage, students were introduced to the research requirements and explained their rights as participants. Starting from week three of their academic year, students completed diaries at their leisure; at the same time, the classes were observed for any themes emerging from the teaching context. Then, if any common themes were noted, the research students were asked to reflect on this in their diaries. As is explained later in the instruments section, diary writing is not left as an open and generic task, it is cued based on classroom observation. After three weeks of writing a diary, students wrote academic essays for their teacher. After that, students were interviewed on their experience of diary writing and writing academic essays. Following this is a stage of blogging, in which the diary was continued on issues emerging in both the classroom and the blogging activity. After blogging three times, students were asked to sit for a second interview in which

they discussed their respective experiences. In the following week, the two groups sat in a group interview. Both teachers were interviewed individually.

3.2.1.3 Sample and Sampling

There have been many decisions taken throughout the process of recruiting participants in this study. Following Cohen's *et al*. (2011) suggestion, there is no clear-cut rule as to what is considered an appropriate size of participants as this decision should be influenced by "fitness for purpose." Additionally, as the amount of different types of data being gathered for a particular study should inform the size of sample, it was a careful decision to include a large enough sample to fully inform the description of each case while being mindful of how much data each additional participant would generate. As will be seen in the next chapter of data analysis, some participants became enthusiastic in producing one form of writing and as such were more informative than others in it. However, there was no way to know who would be more productive in the original recruitment. With this in mind, and following the advice of Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki (2010) that the inclusion or selection of suitable participants is important to give deep and rich data, it was decided to widen the number of participants rather than including fewer. This allowed for students dropping out or becoming reluctant participants.

The basic sampling procedure employed is a non-probability sampling procedure, particularly adopting a purposeful sampling technique. The participants are of two main categories: teacher and student participants. As for teacher participants, two experienced female teachers are involved. Those teachers are teaching writing courses at the college at the time of collecting data. Those two courses are compulsory existing courses for first and second year students. However, it was clarified that they were adapting the materials as the course unfolded because all of the courses are responsive to students' needs and some of them are updated by the teachers individually. As is seen in Appendix 3.1, the teacher received a course description (by the Head of the department) which included a breakdown of the teaching per week. They had flexibility to focus more on one area than another or add more materials, tasks and activities in response to student needs. The nature of their participation in

the study is central, as the study centres around the idea of drawing attention to the built-in audience inside the classroom. The teachers acted in many cases as participants in the design and implementation of the writing course through their provision of tasks for academic writing. They also acted as facilitators to the study by reminding the student participants of the nature of the study that they had committed to, and by allocating time for me to explain my study to the students or collect some data while in their classroom. They supported students in class, presented tasks (that are originally designed in the course) and gave feedback to students on their academic essays (only for in-class academic texts).

As for student participants, seventeen students from two different groups and specialisations were included. Originally, it was planned to include twenty students from one class of English Major students. When approached, however, only ten students showed an interest in participating and within a week one male student had withdrawn from the course. Anticipating more students might withdraw and hoping to include a larger number than was available at that moment, I searched for other students with the same characteristics. Again, only seven students showed an interest in participating. I decided then to include both groups of students with their teachers. It will be shown in Findings Chapters (4,5, and 6) that although I have 17 participants, only a few students showed a full commitment to the research and others varied in their commitment. It was necessary to keep reminding them consistently and periodically through emails, social networks (WhatsApp and Classroom Google App), and class notes.

Characteristics/Class	Class 1	Class 2
Number of participants	10 students and 1 teacher	7 and 1 teacher
Specialisation	Information Technology specialisation	Teachers of English language Specialisation
Year of study	2nd year	2nd year
Books + materials	1-Effective Academic Writing (2006) by Liss and Davis	1-Effective Academic Writing (2006) by Liss and Davis

	2- Inside Reading 3 (2012) by Bruce Rubin 3- materials created by the teacher	2- materials created by the teacher
Level of participants (According to grades in academic essays)	A (90-100) 3 B (80-89) 3 C (70-79) 4	A (90-100) 3 B (80-89) 4 C (70-79) -

Table 3.2: Participants of the study

Inclusion and selection of participants followed a general strategy that included participants who were available and suitable for the nature of conducting this study (Fink, 1995). In fact, the study participants were registered on a course at the college. In line with Silverman (2013), who warns that selection of samples should not simply fall on any available participant at hand, a participant has to be within the parameters of the population and represent its characteristics. Indeed, the selection of the two cases was due to their relevance and similarity to the issues underlined and discussed in the literature review related to teaching writing in an ELT context. In both cases, writing academic essays is the main type of written assignment. In order to support this, both cases received similar support such as instructions on issues related to organisation, structure, thesis statement and topic sentences.

Other factors which contributed to the selection of the study participants emerged from the context. More specifically, the Head of the Department did have a say in which classes might be chosen as being more suitable being more aware of the specifications of the courses taught at that time. Indeed, initially, it was recommended to recruit from groups who, after seeing them, seemed less promising for participation in the study. They were in their entrance level at the college and seemed not yet fully immersed in their studies. Their level in English seemed rather low to be able to compose different genres of writing. Also, the teachers had only one-year experience and expressed their discomfort with participation in a lengthy study (like this one which lasted for more than three months). Upon screening other available courses, Advanced Writing II and English for Academic Purposes (see Appendix 3.2) appeared more in line with this study. Indeed, both courses used Google Classroom app

for communicating with students. This existing use of technology as a platform for communication was ideally suited for this study. After that, the students were contacted and participation was opened to interested parties subject to ensuring that they were offering informed consent (see ethical considerations 3.1.3).

This convenience sampling was fruitful to the present study as it helped increase the participation rate and the power of the data obtained. Due to its time-consuming nature, requiring considerable additional work on the students' part, it was a concern that participants might lose interest having an extra non-credited load on them. To resolve this issue, students were encouraged to write diaries about issues on their writing classes and academic essays submitted to teachers. Thus, a requirement of the study became a requirement of the course. They were continuously cued on day-to-day issues emerging from the classroom so that their responses, whenever they occurred, were still part of normal classroom practice and course requirement. Moreover, the number of diary entries was specified; it was suggested to them that two weekly diary entries would suffice. Participants were able to write their diary entries on their phones, to make them comfortable and choose the most suitable moment to reflect. Additionally, their teachers were involved in the study which created a sense of connection to their work within the college.

The participants were supported through additional workshops, for both diary writing and blogging. There were two basic introductory sessions where all participants were required to attend in order to prepare them for the next step. They were supported with sheets (see Appendices 3.2 and 3.3) to give them a background and examples of each type of genre. In the discussion they were urged to bring their own experiences of writing, if they have them. As for the diary, as they only know the academic type of diary which aims at simply writing a daily routine in description without recording feelings of involvement, personal judgmental or evaluative reflection, participants were reminded of the importance of criticality and bringing personal perspectives to diary writing. To this end, there was a discussion of examples, one of which is Diary of a Whimpey Kid – series of 10 books. This diary set was offered for them to

borrow. Similarly, in the discussion of blogging, students were introduced to the basic blog application (WordPress app) which can be reviewed by logging anytime into the website- www.wordpress.com.

As for the time and place of conducting these support workshops, two sessions per week were specified for 30 minutes during students' free time. These were open for those wanting to discuss any issue related to their work. They were conducted at the college in meeting halls which are allocated for staff meetings, public workshops and visitors' meeting. These halls require separate weekly approvals for use. This choice was weighed alongside the possibility of using classrooms. But unfortunately, classrooms were in high demand and almost fully booked for teaching around the time when the two groups were free. Moreover, these halls were recommended by the Head of English Department because they were supposed to be technically equipped with a projector. The student participants felt more comfortable in these meeting halls given their well-equipped installations and ease of access.

Academic Background:

Students participating in this study specialised in an English Major and an Information Technology (IT) major. Almost all of their study is carried out in English, except for some psychology courses which are taught in Arabic. They have to go through a foundational preparation program that may last up to two years depending on their level in English language and skills. Upon registration at the college, they go through a general English language test among other tests (such as mathematics and computer skills). Writing skills courses were compulsory. As for the sample of the qualitative data, they are in their second year at the college after finishing one year at foundation level. They had already taken a writing skills course.

For teaching writing skills, **Effective Academic Writing** (2006) by Liss and Davis was used at the CAS where three units are covered on argumentative essays, classification essays and reaction essays. The study used those chapters that focused on critical thinking, rhetoric, and the grammatical aspects of writing. Students majoring in IT were studying **Inside Reading 3** (Rubin,

2012) in addition to the above-mentioned book. Their practice of writing was integrated with themes that are in Inside Reading.

Class 1

The teachers of these classes, hereafter Teacher 1 for Class 1 and Teacher 2 for Class 2, faced the challenge of preparing the students academically and linguistically. Teacher 1 addressed this issue by reporting that: '*teachers from other specialisation always blame us for the low level of their students;*' this is because teachers in the English language department are responsible for teaching all English-related subjects. For this group, they were allocated 8 hours per week contact hours from which two hours/week are allocated for writing with some exceptions when necessary. This class, from which 10 students participated in the current study, are in their second and last year of foundation; thus, their level in writing can be assumed to be lower than other students from Class 2. A breakdown of the set curriculum can be found in Table 3.3. The teaching of writing skills is integrated with other skills, i.e. speaking, reading, listening and writing, making it difficult to clearly separate reading materials from the writing process.

Weeks	Classroom materials	Writing-related tasks
1	1- Target vocabulary: crime 2- Readings (2 texts) on Forensics 3- Structures that show unequal comparisons, detailed in Appendix 4.1	1-Rewrite sentences to show similarity or contrast. Choose the correct connector in parentheses 2- Make sentences using ***connectors*** with ideas for the topic above (students generate own ideas)
2	1- Target vocabulary: Fast Food Revolution 2- Readings (2 texts) on Franchise and Private business 3- Tasks: T/F, answer Qs	1-Venn diagram on: Football and Basketball 2- Organize scrambled sentences 3-Analysis of contrast essay in terms of hook, thesis statement, topic sentences etc.
3-4	1- Target vocabulary: autism 2- Reading on autism (and answer Qs) 3- Listen to podcasts about educating children with autism	1- Prepare Venn diagram on two topics: crime (big city vs small city), opening business (private vs. franchise) 2- Correct sentence with grammatical mistakes 3- Write comparison essay
5-6	1- Target vocabulary: Oceans and Sea 2- Readings (2 texts): saving Oceans	1- Highlight outline of example essay 2- Identify if the following is fact or opinion 3- Practice using quantity markers (a lot of, many, a little, few, 4- Identify counter-argument from short examples 5- Planning opinion essay 6- Identify what parts of the sentence is missing (subject, verb) 7- Linking words: Complete the essay with the linking words below. You can use one word a few times.
7	Quiz and midterm examinations + and writing a project in the following weeks	

Table 3.3: Class 1 teaching outline

Class2

As for the teaching that occurred in Class 2, it is important to note that this group of students are in their first year of specialisation (after spending only one year on the foundation stage) as can be seen in Appendix 3.2. Consequently, their level is assumed higher than Class 1. They have 4 hours of actual contact with the teacher that are specific to writing skills only. The organisation of the teaching is not theme specific; rather, it is according to the essay type they are required to write. As can be seen in Table 3.4, their course was divided into two parts: introduction to writing different essays in the first 4 weeks, then writing-up a project. They extensively write different types of essays in a short time with no tasks designed to focus on any particular writing skill.

Week	Topic/Theme	Discussion on
1	Introduction & review	• Understanding classification: essay and paragraph • Editing; polishing, agreed corrections symbols and codes for marking errors • Academic register • Quoting • Paraphrasing • Summarizing • Academic honesty / plagiarism • Citing • Referencing based on APA style (no particular tasks are designed)
2	Comparison & Contrast essay	• list of useful connectors • Brainstorming • Writing the first draft (Revising & rewriting the first draft) • Submitting the second draft (no task was designed)
3	Argumentative essay	• Brainstorming • Supervised peer editing of the first draft • Revising & rewriting the first draft • Submitting the final draft
4	Cause and effect essay	• explain and define purpose • useful connectors for cause and effect • Brainstorming • Writing the first draft (Editing the first draft) and Submitting the final draft
5	Introducing the secondary research project + Planning	• Choosing a research topic; narrowing the topic down • Preparing a research action plan

Table 3.4: Class 2 teaching outline

3.2.1.4 Data Collection Methods

This section discusses the techniques of data collection chronologically as they have been conducted, as seen in Figure 3.3. The data were collected both inside and outside the classrooms where observation and academic texts were classroom-specific, whilst others were completed outside the teaching context. All data collection relevant to classroom took longer than that which was conducted outside.

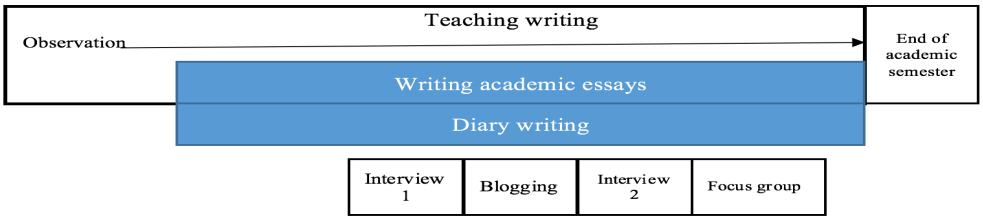


Figure 3.3: Timescale of Data Collection

Figure 3.3 shows the schedule of data collection throughout the academic semester. The data collected were integrated with their writing classroom to avoid disruption to learning. The requirements of the current study were built in gradually so that the learners did not become distracted from their course requirements. Each genre had a designated time frame. The students started writing and working on their academic requirements: making outlines, writing paragraphs or academic essays and completing other tasks (assigned by the teacher) –. all of which will be analysed in the present study. During this time, a diary on their learning was kept for as long as possible. After completing their mid-term exams, they started on blogs outside the writing course requirement. The summary of all data types is presented in Table 3.5.

Method	Participant	Sample size	Repeated	Total data set
Interview	Student	17	X2	34
Diary entry	Student	17	X5 (average)	85
Blog entry	Student	17	X3	51
Academic Essay	Student	17	X3	51
Observation	Teacher	2	X6	12
Focus group	students	15	1	1

Table 3.5: Total data set by methods and sample

3.2.1.4.1 Initial Stages of Data Collection

The initial study was carried out by distributing tablets so that students wrote texts using them. Students received iPads to take home. However, after two weeks of using tablets the students reported many concerns and wanted to use their own phones instead. Firstly, there was technical and technological

unfamiliarity with iPads. Only one student was familiar with the operating system of Apple devices (iOS) while other participants were using phone devices that operate on different systems. Only one student showed familiarity and expressed a desire to use apple store and iTunes, while others seemed in the dark. After writing for two weeks, one student reported that his use of the tablet was minimal as he did not even need to recharge it. He described his experience as simply opening the application writing a diary entry and then shutting it down. This was challenging for me as I wanted to empower them with the possibility of mobile writing: writing anywhere and anytime. This could not be done unless the students themselves felt comfortable using the device and technically ready to use it.

A related issue is the connectivity affordance that is a main impetus of the design of this study. Wi-Fi at the college was limited to a number of users. In order to use a college-based Wi-Fi, a unique IP address has to be entered into the device. There had been a lack of IP addresses to the extent that students who registered during the last two years had not been provided with IP addresses for their personal laptops, and thus could only access College Wi-Fi in the study rooms. This was further complicated by the low expenditure scheme that HE colleges were following, which indicated that immediate solutions to the issue were not in hand. After negotiation with the college technology specialist, only five tablet devices were provided with Wi-Fi access.

A third matter expressed by the participants was ensuring the safety of the electronic device. Some of the participants were extra-cautious so as not to damage the devices. Indeed, they requested a way to avoid using a device that was not a personal belonging. One student returned the tablet without its protective case because he was not comfortable with the case, while others made as little use as possible of the device. This unfortunately ran against the basic assumptions of using a tablet for e-learning.

Due to the un-readiness of both the context and the participants, immediate changes were made. Firstly, in order to optimise the use of mobiles for online writing, use of personal devices was made an option for those preferring to use

their own mobile. However, students were reminded of their opportunity to use an iPad if needed. This change made it quicker and easier for students to do their work from their own devices rather than having a new device to set up. Another change was using the Google Classroom application to replace the tablet applications. Conveniently, the students were already familiar with this application as they had been using it for some of their courses. Hence, once the study was initiated with the participants, an online group in Google Classroom was created. This helped not only student-teacher communication but also facilitated student-student communication. This application has many affordances such as sending requests and research documents, reminding students of project requirements, making group announcements and allowing for individual communication with students. Each time anything was posted to this online classroom, each participant receives an email notification. And vice versa, each time any student submitted an entry for their diary, the researcher received instant emails. A demonstration of the group interaction can be seen in Figure3.4

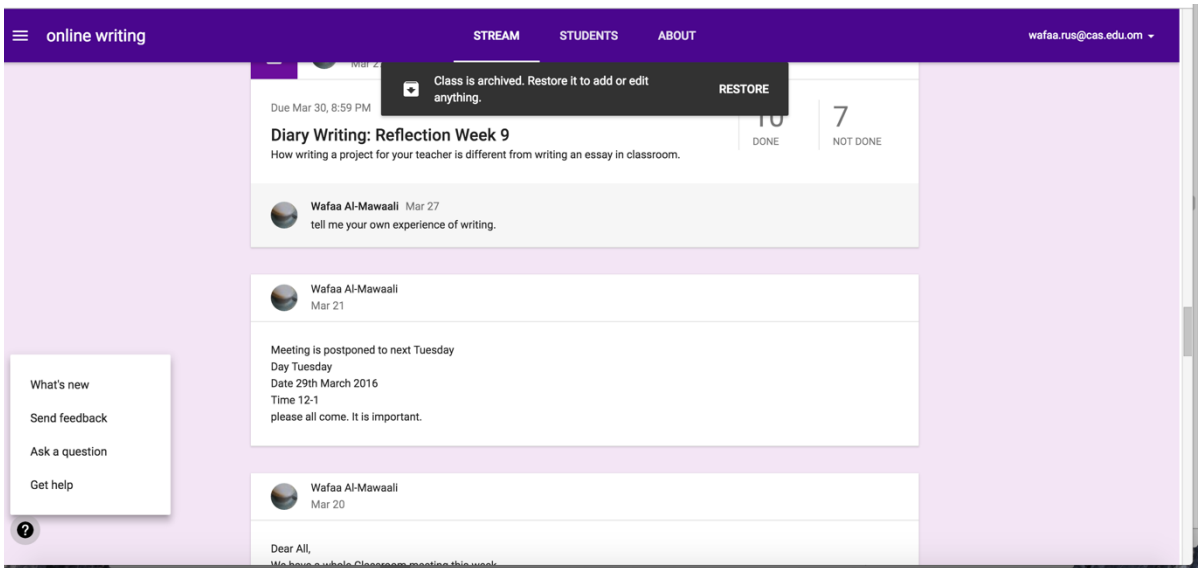


Figure 3.4: Screenshot of Google Classroom

3.2.1.4.2 Texts: diary, academic essay, and blog

The first collected text was diary. The diary was used throughout the whole period of data collection. It was used at the start point of data collection and is the method which utilises the longest time frame. It was used for two main purposes: to collect student responses to different forms of texts and as a genre

or ‘text’ by itself. Having two goals for diary entry aimed to disrupt the sense of ‘audience’ making it two-fold: distant audience, inward audience or a mixture of both. Such issue added to an understanding of ‘audience’ in the project classrooms and is central to the discussion of the present thesis. The writers were inclined to see themselves as readers of their own texts as it acted as a means of revealing their own thoughts through reflecting. It was also one of the texts that students are required to keep for the purpose of the research study to be read by a second reader: a researcher. This provides useful perspectives on what it means to write a diary for teachers. One question for the purposes of this study therefore is whether a distinct voice can be heard in these diaries depending on whether the internalised reader is the self or the teacher. It is acknowledged that the idea of who the reader of a diary entry is, is neither fixed nor stable in the context of this study: the diary was not evaluated or marked and its purpose as a text to collect personal thoughts and ideas was made clear. There is also a question as to whether any diary is only addressed to self – the aim here was to encourage students to think about this for themselves and try to explain their own intentions in relation to the diary.

The form of the diary used in the present study was a semi-solicited diary which was designed to gather and elicit information related to the writing experience rather than keeping it general to wider aspects of students’ lives in order to serve its dual purpose. However, unlike other solicited diaries used in research studies which have pre-specified categories for diarists to be confined to, the tasks for this diary were based on cues emerging from observation of classroom teaching, with the additional support of both teachers to help students write them. The option was given to the participants in terms of the details they wished to write and in terms of being focused on one issue or more than one.

As for collecting the diary entries, it followed two stages. Stage1 consisted of a pre-writing and a preparatory phase, involving attendance of a mini-workshop for 15 minutes to identify the focus of the diary. An examination of different types and examples of diary writing were also included in the session. This was followed by attendance of their writing classes and discussion with their teachers on learning-specific questions. This was particularly useful to avoid

diaries that were dense and unrelated to the main task of '*reflecting about writing experience,*' (Suveg *et al*., 2010) and to ensure that the participants knew how to use the electronic affordances and were informed on the possible ranges of 'diaries'.

Stage 2 focused on the actual writing-up and reflection. This started by posting a question in Google Classroom application – which by this time had been downloaded onto their phones to which the students were given the option to reply within a week, see Appendix 3.5 for list of prompts. The questions were created weekly following a discussion with the teacher about curriculum content or issues noted in the classroom. Providing students with cues to respond to was taken into consideration based on a concern that diaries could be unrelated to the enquiry of the study (Suzuki, 2004). Suzuki suggested limiting the scope of the analysis; however, it was extremely necessary to keep the students informed about the specific aim of the study and its sub-focus. This indeed is consistent with what Suveg *et al.* (2010) consider as important in addressing 'protocol' properly. I sometimes had to induce more reflective and meaningful data when the students wrote one or two descriptive sentences by asking further questions like: *What do you mean by...? Explain why is this important for you? Is this affecting your progress in writing positively or negatively?* The students did not always reply to my follow-up questions; yet to do that was their option. As a result, the diary sometimes became discursive, interactive and accumulative. However, the students in the sample showed strikingly different levels of engagement with this task.

The second text is the electronic version of the academic essays that were submitted in each class designated by Google Classrooms, to which I was added as a co-teacher to ease access to e-materials. Different genres of academic essays were taught and practised in both classrooms: argumentative, cause and effect, and comparison and contrast. The composition of these texts followed firstly teacher's instruction, secondly practice writing, then submission and resubmission of two drafts. The final draft was collected for the textual analysis part of this study.

The main criteria of these texts are that they follow academic purpose and format. Firstly, these texts were teacher-oriented ones, produced in the classroom for the purpose of marking and feedback. Secondly, they were constructed following an academic format and style as taught in the classroom. Moreover, all texts were five paragraph essays including an introductory section, three body paragraphs and a conclusion. The assumed audience for these texts was not only their class teacher but also their teacher acting as a marker or assessor of their work. In this sense these texts were most typical of college-based writing, both in terms of their form and the teaching that influenced them.

The third collected text was blog texts. Blogging was set up in the second part of the academic semester, specifically after finishing the mid-term exams. The blogs are only written for the purpose of the present study and their teachers are not involved in them. By this time, the students had one month to follow the study requirements before starting to concentrate on their texts; as a result, three weeks were planned for blogging and one week was for reflection and feedback. Blogging was also divided into two stages: firstly, setting up; secondly, writing entries and cross-communicating. For the first stage, some students took longer than others due to technical issues reported while setting up their own blogs; some had a quick start. For the early starters, it might be that they were used to operating technologies as they later helped their peers in setting up blogs and gave advice on differing issues. A possible explanation is that they showed quick adaptation to the blogging task as they were flexible in selecting topics related to their own lives, which was the focus for the blogging activity. The second group of students managed to overcome their lack of acquaintance with the technology within two weeks. Later they joined their friends in posting entries and commenting on others' posts.

All three texts – academic essay, diary, and blogs – were written and submitted in an online form. When setting up the online environment, there were some challenges associated with the use of Google Classroom in the current context. The application did not have an in-built reminder before deadline of submission. For instance, one of the participants Sharifa (pseudonyms are used) raised an

interesting issue about her experience of using Google Classroom; she complained about forgetting to complete assignments in time. She indicated that she never had been, in her school life for twelve years, late in submitting her work until the Google Classroom application was applied at the college. Nonetheless, she is a technology student who explores different applications that can be useful for organisation. She introduced her fellow peers to try an application she was using. It helped organization and sets reminders for different duties. She reflected saying that; '*but take the belief that people who wrote down whatever they want to do, they achieve it at the end*' (sic, blog text: Sharifa). This encouraged her peer fellows to try using it.

Nonetheless, technology can fail to support some skills associated with writing development such as being able to spot and correct one's spelling mistakes and the grammatical errors personally. On this issue one student reflected on her experience on the use of the technological writing over pen-and-paper writing: '*Electronic is bad, because you know there is press and correction, correction, give correction, and we are feeling lazy, we are doing it so fast and send it to teacher'* (sic, interview: Eram). She described the process of correcting their mistakes as being too fast because there is no personal attempt to track the mistakes. Adding to this, it is already autocorrected for them effortlessly through the readily available features of Auto-correction in the word document. This issue was a particular problem for those students with lower levels of writing skills. In this context a low level would indicate those students who tended to make numerous grammatical and spelling errors; and as the teacher acknowledged, needed considerable practice on these two sub-skills of writing. When the writing medium is shifted to an electronic format, there is a replacement for this skill by the in-built auto-correction feature in the phones. Indeed, the quality of the e-texts could be much better if compared to the ones written on paper in terms of grammar, spelling and punctuation. This, in fact, is a crucial point for the teacher to consider as it has pedagogical consequences and has, accordingly, to be addressed in the classroom by use of creative tasks that draw attention to what has been auto-corrected – perhaps identifying common misspellings and so learning from the correction process itself.

With a reference to the wider context, there was a considerable issue relating to the network connectivity and the coverage at the college. This presented a challenge for teaching materials that were supposed to be taught online. For instance, Teacher 1 integrated her teaching tasks online; as such every student attended the classroom with their private laptops that had to be connected to the college Wi-Fi which continuously broke down, resulting in wasting time in the classroom. This situation caused the teacher to start her lessons 20 minutes or half an hour late many times. The Wi-Fi is computer specific and as such every laptop has to be given a private serial number to gain access. Not all the students were granted this number due to the limited serial numbers available. The college was going through a change in the type of network at that point; however, it was made longer by the financial reduction the institutions are making at the Sultanate, as clarified by administrators who spoke of the continuous demands to solve the students' situation as they were participating in the current study. The officials could not be sure when the system was going to be changed, although there is a possibility that the situation will change and will support faster and speedy technological changes in the future.

This situation was counter-acted by the use of **Connectify.me** application in the teachers' and other students' laptops. This application turned the laptops into a hotspot to connect with the other five laptops to share the internet. Another solution was purchasing a private portable Wi-Fi router device that was moved around the classes. This indeed was useful when the signal of the college Wi-Fi lost strength. With the combination of the two, the teacher managed delivering classroom materials smoothly.

Another challenge raised in the context was the low level of technical support available at the classrooms when any failure occurs. Teacher 2 designed preparatory materials on every type of essay – cause and effect, argumentative, and comparison and contrast. The materials were explanatory in the form of presentations in PowerPoint, Word document, or short videos. At the college, there is a technician team who are assigned to provide assistance on any matter. Their assistance was required by Teacher 2 who faced a failure in the Proxima Projector. Her connection did not work in one of the classrooms,

so she went and asked for support. The team refused to come to the class to check the problem and gave her a different connection which also did not work. Similarly, as I was using a Mac device which is not usually supported at the college, I asked for a connection when I worked on the blogging platform to explain face-to-face how to blog. The technician team had only one connection which they would not lend to any teacher at the college. As such, the only solution was to buy one to be used in that short period.

3.2.1.4.3 Observation Method

Observation is typically an ethnographical method where the researcher lives in the natural setting of the investigation. Hence, this method is tied to ethnography more than other methodologies. This method involves following up and keeping notes of a particular event, person(s), place naturalistically (Marshall and Rossman, 2014; Mathison, 2005). Hence, it renders a descriptive log of the social event and is a way of 'seeing' natural events, actions or behaviours.

Yet, due to its nature there are certain caveats surrounding the observation method as a social science method. Firstly, it is characterised by the major role undertaken by the researcher in recording notes (Marshall and Rossman, 2014) which runs the danger of incomplete records as an individual's observational skills tends always to be partial. Secondly, observations can always be shaped by the in-world understandings/views and mentality of the researcher which can lead to the 'cherry picking' of certain events as significant. In response to this, the present study aims to mitigate the 'passive role' of the participants through representativeness, by including their perspectives on events as well as researcher observation notes. Thirdly, the influence of *observer's paradox* is likely to happen when participants change/moderate their normal behaviour (Richards, 2003) due to the existence of an observer. It was hoped that increased familiarity with the presence of the researcher over the three months of the study, would, in time off-set this possibility.

One aim of the study is to ensure that the voices and concerns of students are present authentically. Interpretation of 'what really happens' takes into account

the subjective views or perspectives of the participants which are not excluded because participants get to voice their concerns in interviews. Additionally, the *observer's paradox* can be addressed by clarification of intentions and managing the relationship with the participants. For instance, Richards (2003) recommends clarification should be made to the participants to reassure them that the intention is to: "ensure as far as possible when taking notes that this [behaviour/action] is not apparent to others present" (109). And indeed, if privacy is assured, then honest reports of events will not harm the participants. On the contrary, these reports may benefit the participants by revealing self-awareness of their own motivations and behaviour.

The observation in the present study was non-participatory and semi-structured at the same time (see for an example Appendix 3.6). The researcher attended the classroom in a similar manner to any student: seated at the front facing the teacher and during the discussion, changing direction towards the students. Occasionally, I asked the students about their writing after they had finished writing paragraphs or essays or completed a task inside the classroom. Additionally, the observation was a semi-structured one, with the aim of narrowing the scope of the observation to specific areas (Bryman, 2012; Denscombe 1998). Thus, 'focus questions' were created prior to observing (see Appendix 3.5). These questions are focused on the teacher's instructions, the use of technology, the time allocated for writing, and group tasks and feedback. Alongside this, the two classes were voice recorded. For data analysis both written notes and audio records were used. In Appendix 3.5, it can be noted that the session is only an oral discussion led mainly by the teacher on understanding main concept of cause and effect generally and drawing on transitions used in essays. There is also an analysis of a text in terms of organisation, with no focus on how ideas were brought together to make an argument, i.e., meaning-making. All of observed interactions inside classroom are discussed with the students in interviews; thus, both form the grounds for data analysis.

This method has value for the collected data that other techniques cannot offer. Firstly, it is used to validate what students reflect in their diaries and to

understand their situation. Secondly, it focuses on events that are not directly related to the participants' behaviours or practices yet might be of value to help understand the wider context the participant is experiencing. Thirdly, it is useful in order to understand the behaviour of the participants, and not depend on their memories to recall moments pertaining to the study (Bryman, 2012).

Following the participants in their writing classes, I became better acquainted with the participants, and was going through the same experience as they were. This allowed for a basic interpersonal understanding of the decisions, values and experiences of writing different genres. It was a means for building understanding of individual realities. These formed the basics for not only knowing how to support the students writing in their diaries, but also knowing what questions were suitable in the interviews.

3.2.1.4.4 Interviews: individual in focus groups

Two types of interviews were collected; firstly; individual interviews; secondly, focus group. The interview method of data collection is "a professional interaction which goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge" (Kvale, 2007:7). It is also a one-to-one oral communication (Fontana and Frey, 2000). It is not a naturally occurring conversation as it is constructed around particular intentions of the interviewer. The interviewer may have power over the interviewee, particularly in the case of the present study. However, a significant strength of this method is that it can follow the format of an interviewee-led conversation whereby the interviewee brings forward issues that the researcher did not expect as highlighted by Robson (2002). As such it is a mutual negotiation of meaning that entails building of communication 'suitable' to both of interviewer and interviewee. Nonetheless, "interviewing allows a researcher to investigate and prompt things we cannot observe" (Wellington, 2015: 71). As the aims of the present study were to give young writers an opportunity to talk about their own writing choices and experiences, the interview for this study offered them a chance to express their inner voice as writers and as learners. This is highly valuable, as it contrasts to what is usually visible in the teaching

context which is teacher-oriented: the teacher having a higher hierarchal knowledge status and generally running the learning experience

Two short semi-structured interviews were designed based on both the literature review and the context (see Appendices 3.7 and 3.8). The first interview addresses RQ-1: How do they see themselves as writers in general? and RQ-5: What is the perceived Audience of Diary and Academic texts? All of the questions were adjusted to what they had been learning in the classroom. As the teachers followed the process approach, the students described their individual writing in relation to this. They talked about sources of content, grammar, vocabulary and recursive drafting. Most importantly students were asked how they complied with their teachers' requirements and how the teacher – as a source of information and instruction – has an impact on their texts. The second interview was influenced, to a significant degree, by sociocultural theories that highlight the cultural context for writing and assume an influence between different cultural entities. Thus text was seen as culturally affected by other factors such as perception of reader, technology, existing experience of writing, prior teaching and external life outside the college. As such all of these factors were explored and asked about. One important factor seen as especially important to investigate was the effect of classroom teaching on their internalisation of 'writing' as an autonomous and personal act. The observations and interviews together allowed for what was said to be interpreted in light of what was experienced in the classroom

In practice, students filled in online forms to indicate suitable slots for interviewing. On site, each interview was recorded. They lasted from 5 minutes to 20 minutes depending on the amount of time each interviewee needed to share their insights. Aside from these structured interviews, a sit-down time was scheduled to discuss with the interviewee meaning and usage of expressions used in the different texts they produced. For example, students used plenty of plural terms to refer to the teacher or to refer to themselves; i.e., (we) refer to (I), and (they) refer to the teacher. It was possible therefore to ask students about features identified in the texts they wrote and seek their own account for why this was so.

Regarding group interviews, they are “systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a form or informal setting” (Fontana and Frey, 2000) to uncover agreements and disagreements about the value of different genre texts, i.e. academic texts, diary texts, and blog texts, and to give them a space for comparing their experiences with these texts retrospectively.

This proved very fruitful as the students took sides and defended their views. They not only built on each other’s thoughts, but each individual was also eager to ‘voice’ their thoughts. Interview questions were generic and were led by the students. Examples of questions were: describe your experience with diary/blogging/in-class writing, compare which one you preferred and why, and which type is likely to benefit you educationally (see Appendix 3.9). This lasted for 30 minutes, and was the only available time according to the students’ timetable. Two students were unfortunately unable to attend the focus group due to extracurricular activities outside the college.

3.2.1.5 Analysis Process

The analysis process entailed using the NVivo program to generate themes. Different qualitative analyses were utilised to investigate the social phenomena (texting to a reader). As seen in Table 3.6, diary and interview methods were analysed in terms of themes generated using thematic analysis.

Analysis type	Thematic analysis	Textual analysis or (audience-coding)
Methods	Diary texts Interviews (individual and focus) Observation notes	Essay texts Diary texts Blog text (both main entry and comments)

Table 3.6: Data analysis techniques

Additionally, audience-coding strategy was used to analysis how students addressed their readers even if the medium of writing differed: academic essay, diary texts and blog texts.

Firstly, thematic coding is “the process of identifying themes or concepts that are in the data” (Ezzy, 2012: 86). It allows similar data to be grouped together. It is a systematic evaluation of data to allow emergent codes that are not based on pre-existing theory. Following the description of Ezzy (2002), he envisions thematic coding in agreement with two key grounded theorists – Straus and Glaser. This alignment is explained due to a great similarity of both thematic analysis and grounded theory analysis. Indeed, both of these analysis schemes are concerned with inductive data. As such, restricting and pre-existing theories do not restrict what the data can reveal.

Ezzy (2002) accounts for three main steps in thematic analysis. Firstly, the researcher starts with open or exploratory coding. It is not a straightforward process and can be chaotic to a degree because it involves ‘constant comparison’. Here, different categories are expanded, grouped, or broken down. By the end of this process, each code is identified by key features. The next step is axial coding. Its key focus is on grouping coding around “the axes of central categories” (Ezzy, 2002:91). This means configuring major themes. The final step is selective or theoretical coding which involves identifying the main code around which other codes can be organized. One code might constitute the basic one while others can serve as explanatory or supportive. At the end, this process ends with having a central story centred on the main topic of investigation.

Regarding analysis of interviews, there are other influential factors informing the analysis of audience relating to classroom context and academic writing for teacher audience. These are mostly focused on in the interviews of students talking about their own understanding of audience. These factors of audience are extracted from the views of Grabe and Kaplan (1996) who state five important parameters: number of readers, whether known or visible, whether there is shared knowledge, relative status (i.e., higher-lower), and the extent of the knowledge to be shared. The last two parameters are relevant to the

investigation of the present study and yield valuable data as to what it means to have different statuses of readers for the writer.

As for the textual analysis of the three different genres, this was conducted through metadiscourse. It is concerned with how both writer and potential reader engage in interaction socially. There are varied views on how this is conducted in terms of actual analysis. However, the present study makes use of Hyland's (2005) and Hays' *et al.*'s (1988) key work on metadiscourse. The first scheme conceptualises a reader as implied in the text. As such, it includes classification of rhetorical features in texts that refer to a reader. The analysis of audience in the Hays *et al*.'s work was applicable to the present study because it was designed to analyse a text for evidence of an imagined audience. As such it includes strategies for addressing audience explicitly and strategies for arguing with or against a particular audience. Both views – as can be seen in Figure 3.5 – help to build views of reader-in-text.

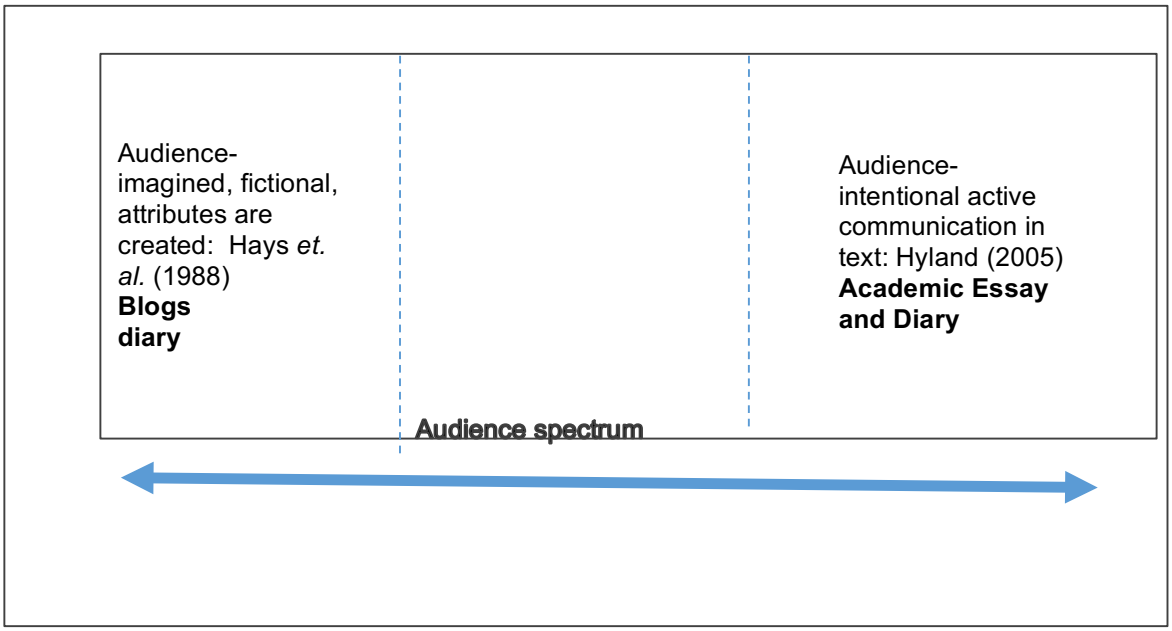


Figure 3.5: Analysis of reader in three genres

The notion of reader-in-text, has been termed as metadiscourse among other different terms. It is defined as "the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of

particular community" (Hyland, 2005: 37). Here the emphasis is on the functionality of a text socially to convey content and to 'engage' with the (expected/planned) recipient of the text. In his definition, Hyland makes it clear that metadiscourse separates the communicative content (i.e., propositional meaning) and is not concerned about it; however, it is concerned about how this message is made clearer in the text using specific textual features that can be recognized as interaction between reader-writer. In this sense he argues that, instead of considering connectors as functioning only to connect ideas, they can also be markers of the writers' experience: interpersonal. Here, the reader is viewed as having needs and thus the writer tries to address them. Moreover, Hyland argues that the textual markers that indicate a metadiscoursal meaning should indicate that writers' estimation of an event, and do not represent a fact that is external-to-the-writer judgment or evaluation. This is clear when we consider the categories of metadiscoursal markers. He represents them in an interpersonal model, as seen in Table 3.7.

Secondly, Hays *et al.* (1988) present a useful classification of textual analysis. It affirms that for a text to be successful, it has to accommodate the potential reader and any possible consequence of a text. A text that is interactive in nature aims to be thought-provoking and raise ideas which a reader might want to consider responding to. However, it seems that this audience is not personally known for the writer. In this sense, audience can be given to a writer in classroom instructions. Audience can be accommodated through five different textual strategies, as seen in Table 3.7. All of these strategies can denote a thinking of a potential reader. Hence, these categories are used to support cues and questions generated for interviewing students to report who their audience was when composing the differing texts. However, categories presented by Hyland seem to be more comprehensive; therefore, are adopted in the textual analysis of the three genres of the present study.

Hays *et al.* (1988)	Hyland (2005)
1-Name reader: directly indirectly (you, one)	Interactive move: Self-mention: I, we, you, my, your, our
2- Strategy: Direct reader to take action by (convincing or urging strategy)	
3- Context *: *Clarifying context and* give personal position: to talk about background.	Interactional mover: attitude marker
4- Response: Mention a point of view of a reader to validate it or rebut it	
5- negative appeals: Failure to address the reader appropriately (blame, insult, attack), inaccurate attributes of a reader	
	Interactive Moves: Transitions (i.e., moreover, additionally, but, however) Frame markers (i.e., to start with, finally) Endophoric markers (i.e., mentioned previously, discussed above) Evidential (i.e., According to Z, X states) Code gloss (i.e., namely, in other words, particularly)
	Interactional Moves: Hedges (i.e., may, might, seem) Boosters (i.e., surely, definitely)

	engagement markers (i.e., as you can see, as it appears, you may agree, you can look at, think about)

Table 3.7: Textual analysis of audience strategy by Hays et al. (1988) and Interpersonal model of reader-in-text of Hyland (2005)

Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse moves are categorised into two main areas: interactive and interactional. In the interactive category, the writer guides the presumed reader through the text by use of logical connectors, code gloss, topic marker, endophoric markers and evidential markers. Through utilising moves in the interactional category, the writer involves a presumed reader in the text by using hedges, boosters, self-mention and engagement markers. Further clarification and exemplification of each move is provided in Table 3.8.

Type of move	Definition	Examples
1. Interactive markers: support the reader (or audience) when reading a text		
1.1. Logical markers	- transitions: used to link and organise ideas such as additive, contrastive, remark consequence -frame markers	also, additionally, in addition, furthermore, moreover, similarly, additionally, likewise, but, on the other hand, however, yet, rather, in contrast, nevertheless, instead, alternatively, conversely, by contrast, though, otherwise, as a result, as such so, then, thus, therefore, consequently. - first, second, then, next, after that, to begin with
1.2. Code glosses	To make clarifications by: - reformulation	-In other words, which means, that is, specifically, precisely, in particular,

	-giving exemplification - Words of summarizing also go into this category	particularly, namely, specifically - for instance, for example - to sum up, overall, in conclusion, in summary, in sum, finally, to conclude, in short, all in all
1.3 Topic marker	markers used to refer to particular topic/subject	regarding, in regards to, with regards, concerning, in terms of
1.4 Endophoric marker	markers used to refer to ideas previously mentioned for cross-referencing	as discussed previously, as above, as earlier, previously, previous
1.5 Evidential marker	used to support by citation and quotation	According to.., X said…,
2. Interactional metadiscourse markers: used to involve the reader in the text		
2.1 Hedges	markers that indicate uncertainty, speculation and show cautions	could, may, might, seem, suggest, perhaps, likely, basically, probably, assume, expect, at least
2.2 Boosters	show level of assertiveness and strength of claim	obviously, clearly, substantial, in fact, surely, actually
2.3 Attitude markers	Show evaluation or sentiment	significant, important, unfortunately, fundamental, surprisingly
2.4 Engagement markers	personal reference including others -questions, imperatives, and directives	-we', 'us', 'our', 'one', 'you' -look at, note, see, note, should, need, must,
2.5 Self-mentions	Reference to the writer	I, Me, my

Table 3.8: Hyland's interactive and interactional categories

3.2.2 Quality measures of this study

Ensuring quality pre-, during and post-data collection is seen as crucial for reporting events as they actually occur. However, the need for specific criteria to establish the quality of research has become an increasingly contested issue over the last few decades (Bryman, 2012). This dilemma persists due to the divergent views of what constitutes real knowledge and by differing methodological approaches (Hammersley, 2007). Guba and Lincoln (1995) provided criteria that are based on premises close to the views of the current study – there can be no absolute knowledge about the social world. Following Guba's (1985) two main categorizations: trustworthiness and authenticity (Bryman, 2012), the current study is based on the same impetus, aiming for these principles. The following section will look more closely at these measures of qualitative research and analyse what they consist of and how they are achieved. There are four essential quality sub-constructs in trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

Firstly, credibility is to tell with confidence that the reported data accurately match phenomena in reality (Shenton, 2004). From Shenton's list for ensuring congruence, Greetz's (1973) term 'thick description' is a credibility criterion that includes rich data about the phenomena. In the context of the present study, different kinds of data are gathered through observation, interviews and students written texts to enrich understanding about 'audience'. The second construct is transferability which relates to whether research could be replicated in another context of similar interests (Shenton, 2004). The research community has been in dispute as to whether this construct should be a control measure of the quality of interpretative data, given that it holds an implication similar to "generalizability". Small-scale studies are less likely to bear elements that are generalizable to wider contexts; neither do they intend to do so. To this end, Shenton considers providing thick description as one control for ensuring transferability. For this, the current study depends on multiple types of qualitative data that are collected over a sustained period. The third construct is dependability which means that repetition of the study would yield similar results if it were conducted by a different researcher given the same context, enquiry, and participants. To achieve this, consultation of an external audit is

suggested. For this, lists of cues for elicited diary writing were consulted with the teachers. Additionally, design of the present study was made following close consultation with the two teachers in line with students' demands. Fourthly, conformability or objectivity ensures that findings are not affected in any way by the researcher's disposition (Shenton, 2004). This could be achieved by being reflexive during data collection. Furthermore, this case study depends on multi-methods which strengthen the power and confirm the accuracy of results. This transparency, to some extent, removes and detaches the researcher from closely affecting the data.

It is now relevant to consider in more detail two important measures to ensure trustworthiness of research: reflexivity (Bryman, 2012; Shenton 2004) and triangulation (Bryman, 2012). As for reflexivity, the researcher should be sensitive to the differences existing in the world without allowing the inner self to shield reality. This poses a responsibility on the researcher to be critical about every step of investigation. For this, I kept a research diary (both oral and written) in which I wrote my personal perspectives on the different factors effecting research (see Appendix 3.10 for an extract). I tried to optimize participation by allowing the students to make changes during data collection. Moreover, there were changes in the original design of the study in relation to the use of technology which were made according to the students' requests and preferences. Additionally, some learners were considered as naturally less eloquent or expressive which may inhibit their communication in English language; this is in line with Seliger's (1983) warning that issues of accuracy might be affected by the diarist's 'conscious awareness'. As such, students were given the choice to use both first and second language to express their thoughts. This was seen as imperative to consolidate reliability in interpreting data. Additionally, different types of data pertaining to learning experiences were collected, so that the report of the cases is not only about what the researcher observed but also through documents of learners' texts in the classroom. As such, the students' outlines and plans were also included as part of writing their texts. This resulted in thick description, where different methods were used: observation, interviews, and students' written texts. In this way, a

question is answered through different methods, and the aim is to build a complex picture of a particular phenomenon.

3.2.3 Ethics and Rights of Participants

For this study, an ethical commitment to the safeguarding of the research participants was taken into consideration in accordance with the British Educational Research Association (BERA). Ethical codes of practice refer to the morality of the researcher (Renold *et al.,* 2008) during constructing, conducting and reporting on the study. The basic goal is to protect the research informants from any intentional or accidental risk emerging from the study or the researcher (Israel and Hay, 2006). Although the study is of importance, its benefits should not be at the expense of the participant's safety, rights or dignity (Beyrer and Kass, 2002). This chapter will consider a number of ethical issues that particularly emerged due to the nature of this study. In addition, certain approaches that were taken to eliminate the foreseen risks will be presented.

The students could disclose personal information that they did not originally intend to share with the researcher or online while blogging or diarying. This disclosure can also occur in interviews; then the participants can feel betrayal (Shaw, 2008). That is, as Flick (2007) elaborates, the participants are the focus of attention, perhaps more than they would be in a natural context. This issue was discussed prior to interviews and blogging making it clear who would be reading or analysing their words; both in written and spoken form. Proper use of Google Classroom was discussed so the students could submit private diary entries differently to ones that were viewable to their peers. Students were reminded of this at all stages of data collection, including that, if for any reason they would feel uncomfortable about any kind of questions (either in diary cues or interviews), they should talk to the researcher about it. There were a few instances where the students complained about issues related to their course, but withheld direct reference to their teacher. Nonetheless, it was made clear that whatever was said would remain private and not be shared with their teachers.

A further issue was related to the participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any time they wish (BERA, 2004) which can disrupt the study. Because every participant in this study is highly valuable, any discontinuation for any reason means loss of essential data. However, making the participants obliged to attend all workshops ran against their right to withdraw from the study at any time. In compliance with BERA guidelines, coercion or duress is unacceptable. Participants' right to withdraw at any stage of research, if they opt to, was clearly stated in the consent form and repeatedly explained verbally (see Appendix 3.11 for consent form).

In general, there are basic considerations that are of value to plan before embarking upon the study. These fall under protecting the rights of the participants that involves voluntary informed consent where every consequence known was discussed and explained without duress. Part of this involved ensuring that participants understood what possible dangers, responsibilities or extra work involvement in the process of this study entails. It was particularly important to ensure that they understood the level of commitment with diary writing as it can be highly demanding work (Kenten, 2010). The participants in this study expressed their willingness to participate, wanting to seize the opportunity for extra practice of writing. This held the danger of misunderstanding the commitment, which would jeopardise the research if they withdrew once the full extent of the task became clear. To address this, it was imperative to clarify every requirement in a pre-writing meeting that explained this issue.

Additionally, selection of participants excluded interference from any other parties (teacher, peer), so the researcher made sure that participation was of their own volition; i.e. not participating because a friend was. As far as student participants were concerned, this issue had been considered at the level of designing the program: making it extracurricular, not related to the credit-based course where learners can choose to be part of it rather being automatically registered to attend it. As a result of elective participation, the original design of the study was to include 20 students from one group. Only 10 students showed interest to participate. When contacting the second group which had 30

students; only seven students wanted to contribute to the study, resulting in a total of 17 participants.

Both teacher and student participants signed and were given a copy of a letter of consent to participate in the study, which explained their rights and includes the details of study (see Appendix 3.11). These letters outlined the study aims, their expected contribution, the duration of the study, the expected time spent on completing each step in the study and possible outcomes that they might gain as participants. Both letters were checked for suitability by the supervisors.

Additionally, there was the issue of awareness of problems arising from other existing online identities. It was the responsibility of the researcher to highlight sources of possible concern such as fake identity or privacy exposure. Fake identity entails giving false information about oneself and poses the danger that participants believe or do things that might later turn out harmful to them. Another danger of being part of an online community is breach of privacy. Some companies that provide online communication services (see for example Facebook and WordPress websites for agreement of use) may utilize some personal information which is stored online. Therefore, we held a short discussion to raise the participants' awareness of other existing bloggers around the globe and to be careful when communicating with others they do not personally know so as not to provide them with personal information. Attention was also drawn to copyright rules for photos taken from online resources; avoidance of inadvertently copying or plagiarism in blogs was also raised. Students were given an opportunity to read and ask any question related to terms of use in WordPress.

Finally, voluntary informed consent, i.e. a recorded agreement (verbal or written) to the participation in the study, is continuously checked and updated. The consent was signed prior to start of data collection to verify that participants were informedly consenting to participating in the study. However, checking continuality of their consent occurred verbally throughout period of data collection. Following Owens (2010), it is highlighted that consent has to be 'ongoing'. Participants were thus reminded of their elective participatory role in

the study. They were reminded several times throughout the data collection period that their contribution to the study was voluntary and that I had no right to coerce them to participate since I was seen as a teacher at the college. When they were required to write diaries, it was reiterated that any personal information they did not want to share should not be included in the e-diaries. I also informed them repeatedly that it is their choice to participate or refrain from participation in any method of data collection. As such, not all diary entries were completed. Some bloggers refrained from collaboratively commenting on blogs authored by male peers.

However, issues of voluntary participation were affected by the nature of cross-gender relationships existing in Higher Education institutions. This was considered a rather complicated matter due to the nature of the present study. Initiating a study that entails collaborative work and communicative tasks did not only initially deter some females from participating but also drew attention and negative speculation around the nature of blogging and communicating in the comment bar of the blogs. For this, it was optional for the students to use real names or nick names. Their participation in blogging was explained as optional. Because cross-gender tasks are extremely difficult to set-up in classrooms in Oman, cross-gender communication and discussions was foreseen as the most challenging one that might negatively affect blogging. Thus, a breakdown of communication was expected and closely monitored. It was also expected that some male participants might consider this opportunity for approaching female participants for non-academic purposes. As such, students were warned against verbal offences and were encouraged to report any condition immediately. For these conditions, they had my contact details to use at any time.

Voluntary consent presented a particular challenge in terms of its application especially with the open nature of blogs. Perhaps because of its continuity online and because of the possibility of new bloggers following the blog over time, the blog loses its validity as part of a particular study. For this reason, consent forms can expire. The participants were reminded that I needed the blogs to be active for two more additional months after actual writing so that I

would have the chance to analyse them. Yet this was missed by one participant who deleted his blog account without informing the researcher. When contacted, the participant indicated that it was not clear for him that I needed to work on the blogs later.

3.3 Conclusion and Justification

Overall, the present study is qualitative research informed by an interpretive philosophy that holds views of knowledge as humanly-related; therefore, the nature of knowledge in social science is seen as constructed through the visions and seeing through the eyes of the ones who go through the experience. Thus, the focus on learning experiences are particularly those of students' practising writing. For this, an understanding of feelings, behaviours, and perspectives is integral to understanding issues central to 'audiencing' which usually is an internal (cognitive) phenomena but it is constrained and directed by external (social) dimensions. Therefore, a case study methodology is seen as best fitting the purpose of the present study in order to give a direct and detailed focus on 'audience'. This focus is achieved through different methods of data collection: observation, interviews, texts, and reflections (as in a diary).

Moreover, it is important to note some shortcomings stemming from the present design. Firstly, an important dimension of identity is that it is changing and shifting (Gee, 2001). This was not investigated as it would require a more longitudinal study for comparisons to be made and was beyond the capacity of the current study. As such, this study considered the aspect of 'identity' as that which was existing at the time of the investigation. Another limitation that, the present study is not using personally authentic diaries which were originally written for oneself. However, within the limitations context and the focus of the study, efforts were made to ensure that the task was as authentic an experience as possible for the students. In line with this, many worthwhile studies (Barjesteh *et al.*, 2011; Guy, 2004; Jones, 2008; and Travers, 2011) in social sciences research have used diary methods as a means for data collection for specific research agendas. Additionally, there were context-specific challenges that made technological integration continuously a reflective process, particularly because the college does not have open Wi-Fi coverage at the time

of data collection. Additionally, due to the location of the college, network coverage was sometimes lost, which interrupted teaching classes that use technological materials. Consequently, classes were provided with a **modem**, which was purchased by the researcher. The students used their own phones to complete diary and blogs.

Reflections in diaries on blogging could have been sustained over longer periods of time. This was limited by contextual issues relating to connectivity, students' time framework and their pace in completing the blogs. The students took about two weeks to set up the blogs, although this was planned originally to take one week. The first meeting on blogging was hindered by the breakdown in Internet connection which made it a very slow process when using their phones. Additionally, by the time the blogs were set up, the students had one month towards the end of the academic semester which meant they would soon start to shift their attention to completing their assignments; thus, blogging would be deactivated. Moreover, it was not possible for them to write a diary and a blog at the same time. A related challenge was the time constraints. Due to the fact that the students had a very tight schedule, time available for group interviews around their own timetables was challenging to organize.

There were also limitations in terms of the study focus. It was not possible to go further into the relationship between teacher and student in classroom due to the focus of this study on students writing towards different audience. If this had been possible it could have added valuable knowledge in terms of investigating the discrepancies and congruence between what the teacher values as important and what students see as valuable for their teacher. Moreover, questions are limited; if more cases of 'practices' of teaching writing were looked at in ESL Higher Education, it could have added wider insights and explanations to the realty of 'writing' and what teachers do inside classrooms.

Of course, there is, as the results will highlight in the following chapter, the need to create a change in the current way of teaching writing in the second language context. This change has many times been hailed in fields related to authentic materials. However, this authenticity of teaching writing has to have an authentic readership to stimulate a real need for producing written texts. It

would have been particularly interesting to present challenging authentic readerships in the context of teaching writing and analyse the consequent results.

Finally, the case study helped to not only allow the socio-linguistic context to be explored and participants to speak for themselves, but also gave the participants power and additional opportunities to assert their identities as writers. As will be seen in the findings that are to follow, this appeared to impact positively on students who questioned the point of indulging in a skill such as writing when its value is merely grades. This way of viewing writing as a social act has led to the current study focus on texts as a way of representing oneself and responding to the other. It made writing alive and took it outside the usual confines of the traditional classroom with its focus on marking and no real sense of an authentic audience. It raised questions as to how teaching could focus more on empowering the students to make personal use of tools such as diary writing. This chapter comes to an end, but only to open the question to the next chapter where students tell their own stories of experiencing writing.

Chapter 4:
Analysis Chapters and the Political Context of Writing

4.1 Introduction of Analysis chapters

R: Why did you choose this topic?

P: I don't know, the teacher wants topic about technology, I found a lot of information about this topic.

R: So do you have enough information about it?

P: Yes, but I don't know what to write. I have a lot of information. The teacher said I should choose only specific topic.

R: How did you start thinking about the topic?

P: I search from internet, I have three articles, I gave them to teacher. [the student is waiting for the teacher to tell her what to do next]

R: You didn't do anything else?

P: No

R: Why not?

P: I don't know what to do. The teacher wants to see articles.

R: Do you think you don't need to do outline?

P: I don't know

R: How are you going to narrow down the topic?

P: [student seem confused] mmm. the teacher did not help me.

[R is Researcher; P is Participant]

This analysis chapter opens with a short excerpt from an interview with a student describing her planning for writing an essay. This highlights three important areas related to writing: the teacher's influence on the composition, the identity of the writer and finally the text. Accordingly, the analysis chapters reflect these areas and are divided into three different themes highlighting the contextual influences, the identity of the writer and the impact on the resulting text, and finally the writers' sense of 'audience' that is revealed in the texts they write.

The themes are based on analysis of different data types: texts written by students, observational logs, and interviews. These themes are based on codes identified using the NVivo programme, which is software to support the analysis of qualitative data. An outline of the analysis chapters is shown in Table 4.1. Each chapter delineates interrelated aspects that contribute to an understanding of the writing process in the Omani context.

Analysis Chapters	Main Theme	Sub-Themes
Chapter 4	Context of writing (external factors influencing writing)	• Influence of teacher vs peer support • Influence of college-related factors • Influence of technology
Chapter 5	Identity of writing and writer (actual representation)	• Self-evaluation • Independent study • Process of writing texts • Importance of each text type
Chapter 6	'audience': perception and practical decisions	• Definition of 'audience' • 'Audience' in writing • Real vs imagined 'audience'

Table 4.1: Outline of Chapters of Analysis

As for the rest of this chapter, it outlines the general aspects related to both the classrooms where writing was investigated, and the features of classroom practice: what was taught, how it was taught and; in particular, the use of technology to support writing. The concepts are defined and exemplified to reveal how they have been taught in the classes.

4.2 Context of Writing: Perceptions and Practicalities

This chapter presents the pedagogical factors influencing the 'writing' reality in the two classrooms. By reality, it is meant the characteristics of the classrooms revealed in the data, based on assumptions about the practice of writing, which can lead to both teachers and students articulating a particular understanding.

This chapter answers a key question relating to the thinking and the perception of the ESL young writers about the different external issues influencing the process of their 'writing'. It will be shown that reference to the reality outside the students' 'writing' is reiteratively and unmistakably manifested in the students' reflections.

Hence, this chapter will specifically present findings about both teachers' and students' thoughts and perceptions about factors influencing writing. It will also present issues relating to how classrooms are set up and how writing is introduced and practised as revealed in observation and interviews. The students recognised different factors that are directly related to their own experience as 'writers' in the current context. These factors are categorised into two main categories. Firstly, there are external factors (outside the context of the college) related to the personal life of the learner writer: the importance of the specialization for recruitment, the influence of past experiences of being a writer, and impact of technology use. Secondly, there are three internal factors (inside the context of the college) influencing writing behaviour and the written text: the role of the teacher, the role of their peer students and the role of technology. These are to be explained in detail with reference to the perceptions of the learner writers.

4.2.1 External factors:

4.2.1.1 Future work

There was a clear association in terms of writing as a highly influential skill for the process of learning the English language as a whole. It was seen as integral to acquiring other language skills: speaking, listening and reading. Generally, all the students spoke of the need to focus on developing their writing skills. However, Class 2 showed more enthusiasm and related their learning of the English language to their duties to teach English. For instance:

> *Today I feel happy and proud. Every students in school say to their teachers wonderful words. So, today I say to myself you have to wait and be patient to reach that day and your students will do the same as today. How a wonderful day will be! I am sure that my future is between my hands if I lose it I will lost everything* (sic, diary: Nehad).

> *for example, we know the word but we don't know the spelling. Sometime I ask my teacher. It is important for me because you know my major is English and it will be important for my work* (sic, interview: Mazen).

As in the first quote, Nehad's reference to the job indicates that it was her dream to be a teacher. She asserted that 'her future is in her hands'. In fact, she is amongst the most highly competitive students, as described by her teacher. She sought to judge her performance in learning critically. According to her teacher, Nehad regularly sought support outside classroom time. Clearly, she perceived writing as a powerful tool for expression indicating that '*from all these skills i like writing very much because as you know life is at paper which we can power our feelings and emotions in' (sic, interview).* However, Mazen spoke of the importance of the lexical knowledge and use in order to be able to teach properly for the potential students. Thus the demands of a future job are visible in motivation to improve writing.

As in the case of Class 2, from which both Nehad and Mazen are, majoring in the English language was perceived to offer a direct and easy recruitment path in comparison with most other Bachelor majors. It is, as in the current context, perceived as being in high demand in the job market as it qualifies candidates for teaching English at schools, where there is currently a teacher shortage. It is certainly the case that these students do not need to search for jobs, as they are directly enlisted as school teachers and called for pre-job interviews, which is not the case for any other majors in the Higher Education sector in Oman. Thus the security of future employment may reduce a sense of urgency to improve. On this matter, Teacher 2 stressed the importance of mastering writing academically, as she listed many relevant reasons related to the future prospects of the graduates of the English Language cohort. She justified that:

> *they're gonna be teachers... being a teacher is something academic. if they are not introduced to academic writing then they cannot survive later on.. they gradually will have to write some kinds of essay, they have to participate in conferences, some students are willing to continue their education to their higher studies, it is a must to know (sic, interview: Teacher2).*

Therefore, it seems that there is a conflicting influence in terms of the job market. On the one hand, jobs for English language majoring students are easy to obtain. So simply completing the major will lead to a job, which might take pressure off the need to aim high. On the other hand, the job itself is demanding and requires a high level of skills to be successful, which means graduate teachers may struggle to achieve their teaching requirements successfully.

4.2.1.2 External Factors: Writer background

It is interesting that writing was, to some participants, seen as personally tied to the writer rather than only a part of the educational cycle. As such, it is seen as rooted in the writer through different channels other than schooling. For instance, Nehad explained her writing performance as:

> *'writing is a skill which depend on the knowledge of the person himself. i grow on home affects me strongly in writing. my older brothers and sisters are teachers and push me to write alot*' (sic, diary text: Nehad).

She spoke of the influence of her family as a reason for her passion for writing. The interviews revealed a similar sense of family support. For instance, Amar spoke of his previous experience last summer when his parents paid money for him to travel abroad for few weeks to learn English language. Although he was already accepted at the college and there was no need for extra education outside the country, his parents opted to do this for him. In contrast, Eram recalled that the beginning of her passion in writing was in Arabic because she did not like opening up to others and consequently resolved to writing down her own personal fictional world on paper. It seems that 'doing writing' became a hobby for Nehad and Eram. Thus, the meaning of writing extended beyond the context of any classroom. To practise such a 'hobby' attracted much support outside the classroom; this could be said to be especially influential in the second language context. Amar suggests that a key source of writing support is located in the family, which generates significant interest. As such, what can be seen in the classroom is only part of what he possesses as a skilled writer.

4.2.1.3 External factors: The wider community

The wider community specifically refers to anyone who might be interested in reading the texts outside the teacher-student context whether that be a friend or an academic community. In one instance, Eram spoke of the support she had from her followers in a previous experience to continue her writing. She had been tweeting for the last year and suddenly stopped writing for a few weeks; then later, was surprised by one of her friends asking why she stopped writing. Afterwards, she kept writing. She explained that, for that reason, she connected her accounts on Blog with Twitter so that her followers on Twitter could still read her texts when published on a Blog. The influence of a wider community of readers will be taken up again in Chapter 6 where the focus is on the impact of perceptions of audience for these student writers.

Surprisingly, none of the participants in this study were acquainted with the college-based magazine published by the English Community. There is a group of students engaging in extra activities about the teaching of English throughout the year, which represents a wealth of extra-curricular writing opportunities within the institution. This magazine is headed by an academic member of staff who proofreads and oversees quality in content and language; yet it is designed and completely written by the students. It is distributed widely at the college level to visitors, administrators, academic staff, and students. While this opportunity did not impact on the sample in this study, it is clear that the wider community is seen as a potential resource within the institution. Another instance of how the wider community was seen as a potential resource for students was when Teacher 1 reflected on the importance of publication of the written work to the wider community at the level of the college. She reflected about another subject she was teaching, explaining that there were students who created interesting educational weblogs which she felt necessary to show to other readers. She circulated them around to the teaching staff to raise awareness on them. These examples do not relate directly to the present sample; however, they show existing complementary examples of similar initiatives within the institution. Indeed, there are opportunities that can be used to extend readership beyond the class and the teacher.

4.2.1.4 External factors: Technology Impacts

Wider use of technology impacts on perceptions of the role of technology in the classroom. Four students reported a challenge associated with the use of personal phones generally, which was viewed as a source of distractions from study, for instance: '*I stay in the hostel most of the days. Sometimes, I can't find a quiet and suitable place to write my essay. Moreover, my phone and whatspp chatting are the main sources of distraction during writing at hostel*' (sic, Dairy: Laila). This could be attributed to the excessive applications the students were using personally to which they had a continuous commitment to keep. All the students indicated that they used the social chatting application (*WhatsApp*), in which they had many groups with families, friends, college activities and sometimes college classes. Indeed, this application is currently widely used in Oman where it is the only free chatting application that has gained popularity. Moreover, all the participants used *Instagram* and were attracting an abundance of followers. A number of students indicated that they were able to create a large base of followers. For instance, Laila was talented with drawing and had over a thousand fans following her. Additionally, Amjed was good at diarying his life in photos and as such he had over 700 followers. Also, Aref and Shams were photographers and were posting their photos on Instagram and had their own followers. Not to mention Eram who was both a Twitter user and a Blogger. Those active ***whatsAppers*, *Instagramers, Twitterers*** had a life outside their college commitment which took from their time, and which according to Laila can be distractors from completing college assignments. While this is Laila's perspective, it certainly seems that in the wider lives of the students, they are becoming effective users of social media which supports the use of technology in teaching, and supports their understanding of audience in an authentic context.

4.2.2 Classroom Support

This section highlights findings relating to internal factors that influence writing in the present context which are apparently stronger than external ones. However, part of the focus on audience is to consider how to widen the sense of readership to a wider community so that more influence of external factors

can be seen or felt when writing. So, writing and writing behaviour is considered as shaped by classroom practice as well as teacher and peer influences.

4.2.2.1 Classroom Organisation

It is revealing to consider the seating of the two classrooms where writing took place as there were issues emerging from them. Both classrooms were organised as the typical auditorium with a space in the middle to allow for the students going to their chairs, as depicted in Figure 4.1. This is the normal seating in all the classrooms at the college, also used while writing classes were conducted. Seating is gendered and normally the male students take the side closer to the door and the female students take the interior side.

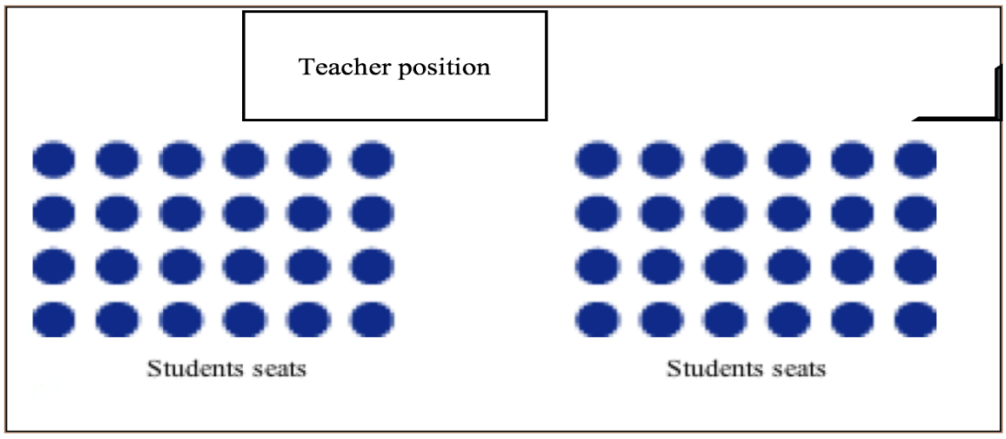


Figure 4.1: Seating in the writing classrooms

Prior to the start of the lecture, the female students, usually, had the freedom to be seated inside and to use the venues whilst the male students waited outside until the teacher arrived. Classroom 1 had one male student who always sat at the front door-side in the classroom whilst the rest sat at the other side of the class. Having only one male in the group made peer work for him impractical, and the teacher herself acted as a peer. The venues of this class were spacious with enough places for the female students to sit in groups of three or two students in lines, where the first two lines were always left unseated. On the other hand, Classroom 2 was allocated smaller venues where the students sit in groups of five or six in the same line. The number of the students in Classroom 2 exceeded the number in Classroom 1. As such, the venues were not allocated proportionately. Additionally, there were 17 male

students and 13 females. Having a large number of students in smaller venues gave the male students no option but to sit in larger groups. Consequently, this did not only restrict teacher's circulation around the classroom, being a female Omani teacher as she would always keep distance from the male students, but also more attention was given to only those sitting in front or those sitting the end of the corridor/lane where the teacher can stand.

4.2.2.2 The Role of the Teacher: Opening up and Closing down Experience

There were two means of support that were seen as essential to aid the writing process and mediate development of this skill as practised in the classroom: primarily the teacher but also the student peers. Most importantly, these students viewed the role of the teacher as being that of a supporter, a provider of knowledge, and as able to offer a critical eye on their writing. It was clear that the students formed an idea about their teacher as judgmental of the text. Both teachers were described with a particular emphasis on the role they took in marking and grading their work. For instance, Farah expressed her concern about grading, afraid she would receive a low grade for this subject and expressing her disappointment that the grading scheme was too tough for her. In another instance, the practice of writing was not valued by the students as much as the graded tasks. This is because pressure is taken off to perform. In fact, not all of the students showed commitment to complete tasks that are ungraded, as can be seen in Figure 4.2.

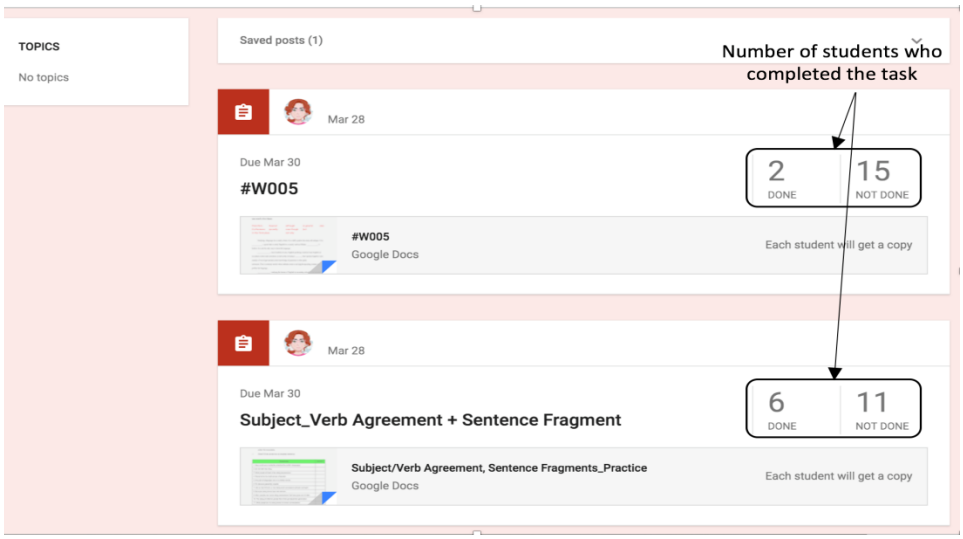


Figure 4.2: Example of Task on Google Classroom

As is shown above, only two students completed the first formative task and six students completed the second. It was not only these two tasks, but many other tasks were left unanswered. On this matter, Teacher 1 expressed her disappointment explaining that there appeared to be a contradiction between what the students wanted (grades) and what they actually did. From her perspective they did not show any commitment to the assigned tasks. Not only that, but also she indicated that she spent a long time on creating those tasks from scratch to match the needs of her students and the requirements of the course. In interviews, all students indicated that not assigning those tasks with marks meant that tasks were not important and that their time was better spent on completing obligatory assignments for other courses due to 'being heavily loaded with tasks'. Additionally, Teacher 1 complained about the students always returning the assignments late, as can be noted in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Time of Task Submission

Figure 4.3 is part of the page that shows the submitted assignment providing a short report about the timing of submission. The names of the students appear above and under each assignment type, in this screenshot it is screened in blue. Upon opening clicking on each assignment, a new page appears showing the exact time the task was submitted. Lack of punctuality in returning completed assignments can be attributed to cultural behaviour as Arab people in general may be less punctual in their time (Levine, 1997).

Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 always expanded the submission time to midnight to give the students the chance to work beyond the lecture time; however, that seemingly was not as effective as submitting assignments face-to-face. Towards the end of the semester, teacher 2 complained of having a student who had not submitted any drafts of any academic essay. She spoke of some

students who did have expectations and did not work hard for them. This could be attributed to the ease of finding a job. She explained that she always provided the students with extrinsic motivation to keep progressing in their performance; yet it appears that they sometimes failed to submit their non-obligatory work. In both classrooms, the teachers did not have on-class submission of essays. This may suggest that the teacher presence in-classroom could make it obligatory to submit all the texts on-time. Additionally, although the students tended to value the teacher at certain times in classroom where their roles were that of a supporter; there were times when pressure of marking and submission of assignment created tension in terms of the teacher's role.

There is a clear vision of the teacher as the source of knowledge in the classroom. The teacher was seen as holding the role of supporting students in generating ideas for writing by directly telling them what ideas could fit in the academic essay (diary: Amjed and Asila). The teacher was expected to give specific information in terms of the requirements of the task and provide information around the topic of the text before starting the actual writing (interview: Farah). Mostly, this was evident in Class 2 as was reflected in this comment '*my teacher show us vedios about that and solve some practoc of reading that relative to this topic'* (sic, diary: Asila). Another student reflected similarly that '*I stop write if the teacher don't say what she want us to write*' (sic, diary: Farah). Indeed, providing content in the shape of video or readings was useful to the students for enrichment and to remind them of their knowledge (interview: Eram). Writing was no longer about knowledge testing, but more concerned with the quality of the ideas, or drawing on personal background to provide further content for the text. Notwithstanding, their reliance on the teacher and peers as the main sources of knowledge resulted in absence of personal voice in the text, which indeed was noted on many of their written texts. Although a deeper discussion will take place in Chapter 5 about the writings of the students, here is an excerpt taken from an academic text submitted as a first draft:

> *There are many similarities between crime in big cities and in small townes. First of all, the crime is crime either in the big cities or small*

> *townes. In big cities the country rules apply to everyone. Similarly, in the towns. there are lowes that punish for the crime in the big cities. similarity, the small town's lowes. like the small townes, the CSIs help to solve the crime and find the evidences in the big cities. Also all criminals, either in small townes or in the big cities, have a motivations to commit the crime. (sic, academic text: Asila).*

There seem to be listing of points: similar laws, similar police and similar motives. This was already 'taught' in the classroom; as such, it was an attempt to gather the classroom information in an academically looking text, showing no attempt to add a personal voice or retrospection on the content the students are writing. This means the student exerts little effort on meaning-making. Meaning-making along with other issues are discussed with a variety of examples of the academic texts in Chapter 5. Here, the point is to show the strength of the influence of ideas and resources of the teacher –while this was valued and useful for the students sometimes an over-dependence on the teacher, as a source of content and ideas in their writing, was evident. This was especially so in class 1.

In classroom 2, the teacher was seen as providing less support for ideas and more as a resolver of the grammatical and structural mistakes. She was seen as follows: '*the teachers of writing classes help me to know my mistakes and tell me the right things. Inside the classroom I can ask the teacher for any criticism and help*' (sic, Diary: Laila). Likewise, '*the miss [i.e. the teacher] teached us how to write without grammar mistakes and when we can us pronoun and adjective*' and '*when I write at home nobody help me to define the mistakes in what I wrote. But in classroom I can ask the teacher*' (sic, diary: Amar). Indeed, both teachers continuously remarked on any error in the structure of the sentences and the use of terms. Although peer correction was attempted, the teachers were perceived as playing a core role in the process of teaching and correcting texts, most specifically as the providers of feedback on grammar accuracy, vocabulary, and spelling.

Drawing on data (both students' perceptions and observational logs) about contextual factors relating to the different teachers' roles, there are similarities and differences. The similarities are that both teachers were concerned with

providing knowledge in terms of grammar correction, vocabulary of coherence (logical connectors between sentences), organisation, giving time for writing practice, critical judgment. Nevertheless, Teacher 1 tended to give more support in terms of ideas, teaching useful grammatical rules and giving mini tasks to recognise important functional sentences. The two teachers created a context for learning and practising writing. The overall experience in the two classrooms indicates that the students were impacted in the way they completed the tasks. In Class 1, some students showed negative fear of the teacher's marking. Moreover, texts were more organisationally and grammatically concerned. On the other hand, students from Class 2 tended to express more self-reliance in terms of ideas and managing the organisational and grammatical aspects of their texts.

Overall, the teacher played an important role in shaping the text and writing behaviour as was felt by the young ESL writers in the present study. Teachers' influence is not only associated as controllers of text quality – in terms of what is marked as good text – but also plays an active role in the process of writing the text by providing ideas. This issue is elucidated in Chapter 5 where process writing is detailed.

4.2.2.3 The Role of Peers: Sharing and Shaping

Support in the classroom extends beyond the teacher. There is also the role of the other learner writers which is mostly mediated and encouraged by the teacher. The students valued the positive effect of working with peers on texts. In both classrooms, the students worked together at the different stages of writing their texts through different tasks. Class 1 worked together on editing each other's texts, and the choice of suitable lexemes. Classroom 2 worked on generating the topic of the essays and writing a paragraph together. The shared paragraph was developed by each writer individually later at home and was subsequently subject to open discussion in the classroom. Teacher 2 spoke of her rationale for encouraging, in particular, peer review after a text is written. Despite her remarks that deeper and more careful changes should be made, peer review proved unproductive for her class. She indicated that peer review was alternated with class discussion of texts in order to guide the whole

classroom as to the possible changes that can be made on the different texts. In many ways the use of peer talk reflected the use of teacher support with a focus on ideas for content, vocabulary or accuracy. In neither classroom was talk seen as a means of shaping meaning and rhetorical purpose through different language choices.

This act of sharing and collaborating with each other on a text was highly appreciated by some students who reported their experiences as '*learning from others [strengths*]'. For instance, Amjed repeatedly referred to the use of his peers' new ideas and Naif referred to the use of new vocabulary and his dependence on peers' opinions for ideas. In line with this, many students from Classroom 2 appreciated that they started writing an essay with peers which they considered as a chance for 'finding' ideas and thus eliminating their struggle with their lack of ideas. This might explain why they ended up writing paragraphs that held similar ideas but were constructed and expressed differently. It indeed shows their sensitivity to elements of writing that are easily transferable and as such they could say clearly that they shared ideas with their peers. Additionally, this 'readiness' to learn from peers was shown by those students who were constantly looking for different opportunities to develop their texts, for instance Amjed tried using different sources for ideas (peers and the internet) and for vocabulary (peer and dictionary). He later showed a strong sense of writing-for-public-audience, during which he was successfully trying to use different interesting topics. Nonetheless despite his continuous attempts, he still was graded as an average student due to the criteria followed by the teacher.

In contrast, working with peers was also viewed as a demanding task by some of these writers. It was seen to: '*require a lot of thinking and writing we collaborate with each other to finish it in the best way and work together we can improve our writing skills*' (sic, diary: Samer). It was viewed as a chance for bringing different content or details; rather more than helpful at the brainstorming stage or for the individual writing task. This is perhaps due to the personal difference the students had which allowed them to negotiate their differences but sometimes required them to work harder; to write beyond and

above their abilities. According to Sharifa, writing with peers is about bringing their best to the text. In this vein, the text is thought to reflect the strengths of those who compose it. Despite this understanding, Teacher 2 commented that even though peer review was implemented, the students did not submit better drafts. However, students' insight into peer support allude to the idea that writing was seen as a 'thinking-aloud' process, which was viewed as advantageous for them to experience. It was not simply a collaboration on a text that was valued, but also that it was a mental collaboration with others – including with those who students might be challenged by (for having less ideas) or might feel reassured by (for having similar thoughts). These students show that they value this opportunity but they were less able to articulate why this was helpful. Perhaps building a supportive community of peers serves beyond simply giving feedback on the linguistic elements of the text.

Furthermore, peer work gave the students the chance to make value judgments about the quality of their work in comparison with 'real' texts that were produced by peers. The other texts that existed in their close environment can serve as examples of texts written by the ESL learners and consequently serve as a real representation of how the text could be. One student reflected that '*if we compare our writing with others that help us to improve it and know the way that they use to write an effective writing*' (sic, diary: Naif). For Naif, the chance to compare his text with other ones can elevate the level of his own text. He suggests that this can be helpful because he had an example to which he could easily compare that is written on the same topic with similar ideas, making it easy to think of any possible changes he could make to his own text. Perhaps also the opposite, comparison of texts makes it possible to see qualities in ones' own text that are not visible in those of peers.

Additionally, writing collaboratively in the classroom makes it easy for the learners to return to and discuss any issue immediately with a peer who is working at the same time on the same topic. As they are mentally involved with the writing and going through the same experience, perhaps, this shared intention and aim means that the opportunity to discuss their ideas is supported by peers who understand what each other is going through. A student

expressed his preference for asking a friend over a teacher about the different ideas and opinions for the academic text (diary: Amar). Similarly, another student resorted to the use of other's ideas by asking them questions and transforming their opinions into his academic texts (diary: Amjed).

However, writing with a peer or near a peer, in the classroom, can bring some challenges. Not all the students tended to write in the time allocated for writing in-classroom. In fact, the students reported so many distractions while writing in classrooms. It was observed that in Class 2 side-talk in classroom took over the actual writing (observational logs). This was normally ignored by the teacher who followed up and supported those who requested her help but left the talkers unnoticed. It was suitable in the context to do this, as they were adults, and the development of their writing is their responsibility and perhaps the teacher would not be able to push them if they were unwilling to support themselves. However, some of them admitted to chatting, reporting that it was tempting to talk about personal topics when they sat next to a friend or a person they had some commonalities with (interview: Amar and Naif). Let us look at a side conversation written in a comment of one of the blogs about what they did in the classroom:

Nehad: You are right... this week I laugh alot specially with you
Eram: I wish you always laugh
Nehad: The most thing that made me laugh is what happen in ….. (a subject they attend together) And I'm sure that will continue napping next times if we sit next to each other
Yes, we will not sit togather next time or we will not focus with the teacher
Eram: okay
Nehad: But it is funny. But believe me if I remmber what happen in [subject deleted] I will not be able to stop laughing
Eram: stop laughing my friend
Nehad: Every time I remmeber I laugh with myself
(sic, Eram blog comments)

This written conversation is a clear example of what sometimes happened in the classrooms, noting that those two students were recognized as being amongst the high-performing ones. Perhaps part of developing a productive relationship for collaborative writing is linked to developing a trusting and open relationship. However, it may also be seen as a waste of their classroom time

when Nehad emphasized being unable to focus with the teacher and having to keep a distance from each other in subsequent classes. As is evident, the two students show a level of self-awareness and ability to reflect on when classroom talk is productive for learning or not.

Undoubtedly, writing in the classroom presented a challenge for some students. Although wanting to use classroom time to practise writing, many seemed unable to so. This made writing feel unfair for those students who had a real desire to improve their own skills and abilities. For example, a student noted that writing in classroom can be difficult due to '*the noise is the most common reason, because the noise depresses the focus and let you stop writing*' (Diary: Aref). For him, it is about the mental focus on the writing. Similarly, it was noted that '*I could not even write a sentence if someone bother my or if there is a lot of movment around. I never like to write in places full of noise*' (sic, diary: Eram). This is in fact compounded when the writers struggle with the language as a second language and especially as in this context where the students found working in classroom helpful to gain access to teachers' support and feedback.

Finally, creating a community of writers who are gathered to support each other and who feel that they can identify with each other is important (Al-Badwawi, 2011). This allows for creating a strong sense of support for each other that makes them feel equal in their quest to develop their language skills. One of the highly cherished experiences that the students had was writing together which made them collaborate mentally, while other tasks (i.e. grammatical correction, structure correction, support with vocabulary) were often considered to be less helpful.

Overall, there is evidence that supports the notion that there is student willingness to engage in peer talk, especially talk that focuses on the act of composition itself. Talk activities are allocated time but perhaps need a stronger focus than is currently the case. A focus on establishing the message of a text and on how to phrase this message effectively, rather than on error spotting or vocabulary building, may well be required. While acknowledging the challenges for students of managing talk, especially where this might involve managing

different levels of language performance and how it might become a distraction, there is perhaps a place for considering how talk might be integrated within the writing process. Perhaps talk opportunities might vary in terms of when they are planned and might occur: before, during and after drafting. Each talk episode, however, would be required to have a clear focus in terms of the writing process.

4.2.2.4 The Role of Technology: Affordances and Challenges

This section reports the main issues resulting from the application of technology in the current context; firstly, in relation to its general use as observed in the two classes; secondly, in relation to its use for data collection. This report is context-specific; as such it recounts hurdles as faced both within the classroom and for the researcher. It explores how the role of technology for this study is built on, or how existing patterns of learning are changed. It also draws on the observation data and interview data to share aspects of the classroom culture which shaped how technology was used and valued.

Firstly, there were some observed uses of the Google Classroom application in the two classes (observation data). This application has one important affordance, i.e. instant notification, through which the classroom students receive instant e-mails about the teacher's assignment or announcement. The students could also download the application on their phones, so that with a Wi-Fi connection or while using their phones' broadband, they could instantly read and reply to the teachers' tasks/comments on their phones. Moreover, using this application extended the submission of the assignments or tasks where the teacher could specify anytime during the day, not necessarily the classroom time. Both teachers usually assigned the submission time at midnight. The application tracks down the exact submission time, which made it instant and clear for the teacher to check who submitted on time. Nonetheless, the existence of the teacher was more dynamic as she could be seen as 'there' not only every time the students wanted not only to submit their assignments, but also when students requested help or asked the teacher for advice. There was an instance of a student requesting an extension to the submission deadline for one of the assignments, to which many students voiced

support. The teacher announced her agreement to postpone the submission, thus responding to student concern which was made visible by the on-line system. There was another instance of the teacher sending not only an announcement but also plans for compensating for a cancelled classroom due to the weather condition as in the following:

> Teacher1
> March 23
> Dear Students,
>
> Due to the weather conditions and the fact that classroom C006A had no access because of flooding (which only I saw because no student even bothered to come there!!), you will write your opinion essay at home/hostel. Please bring them TOMORROW ready to class. You should pick ONE of the topics from our Planning an Opinion Essay worksheet, use the information from your chart/outline and write 250 words opinion essay (by hand).
>
> Tomorrow we will discuss the results of your midterm exam and you will receive your marks.
>
> On Sunday we will have the Reading class we missed yesterday. Your first drafts of projects should be ready for uploading on Sunday 27 March.
>
> See you tomorrow!

The cancelled class was supposed to be on practising writing an opinion essay which instead of being deferred to the next week due to the weather condition, was to be completed at home. Indeed, this proved very useful for the teacher, as it made the communication quicker and the students got to do their supposed face-to-face practice at home instead of waiting until the next day. This, indeed, alters the communication between teachers and learners to be in touch anywhere, anytime and about anything. This reflects similar intentions to the premise of the current study which emphasises the role of technology in the ESL context. Clearly, the two classes participating in the study demonstrated plentiful use of technology, which indicates that the reality of the integration of technology in this study was already underway.

Additionally, the Google Classroom application proved to be pedagogically useful in the classroom through tracking changes that featured in the google

document. This application has its inbuilt google document where Teacher 1 urged her students to write immediately. The teacher gave feedback on a first draft, and then the students made changes on a second draft. The teacher was able to track which feedback was taken into consideration and which was ignored or overlooked. In this way, she was able to see the progress of the written text easily (based on observation). This could also be useful for the students to monitor their own progress and, refer back to different drafts of a written text anytime and anywhere as their texts are saved online.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter reports findings related to perceptions of the different contextual factors influencing the students' progress in their writing skills. Some of these factors are directly related to the classroom context such as: technology inside the classroom, the role the teacher takes inside the classroom, the mediated and unmediated role of the fellow peer. Besides this, there are external factors that are part of the learner writer's experiences outside of the educational context: potential recruitment and past experiences. These factors are not necessarily relevant to the influence of the teacher; however, they are surrounding and influencing the learner writer being at the core of the educational cycle and the one affected by these differing factors. The writers in this manner take from the different experiences available to them which are reflected in the way they see their texts and reader. Texts and perceptions of readership are both expanded in the following Analysis Chapters.

Overall, this chapter looked at the nature of relationship existing in the current writing contexts. However, it alludes to the need to develop a more robust pedagogy for writing which incorporates both SCTs, technology, and peer-peer talk to support the writing process. Based on observation, there is evidence that technology has the potential to enrich these learners' experiences through extending their environmental and social context beyond the classroom which can have a tendency to limit both what is written and what is valued about writing. Effective utilization of the technological affordances, that are mentioned previously in the literature review, can be possible only if students have a network of interaction with others who can extend support. This is because

SCTs offer a means of development through either observation (seeing models of texts and imitating the used language/style/format), or through support that comes from an able writer, i.e. peer, or an expert, i.e. teacher.

Chapter 5:
Writer and Text Nexus: Reality and Practice

This chapter shows the interplay between two major and important factors in 'writing': writer-related categories and text-related categories. Firstly, it presents the understanding ESL writers have about themselves and their performances. As such, this gives an introspection and self-evaluation of the writers in their L2. Secondly, this relates to the representation and understanding of the text type: whether an academic text, diary text, or a blog text. These two main analytic categories are summed up in Table 5.1 as per the themes emerging from NVivo.

Sections	Sub-sections or themes
Writer related Categories	
5.1 Writer identity	1- In academic essay: Technical writing vs. creative writing 2- In diary: descriptive vs. reflective 3- In blog text: self-awareness
Text related Categories	
5.2 Meaning of texts	1- pressure zone versus comfort-zone 2- responsibility of text 3- authenticity
5.3 Texts in practice	1-process of writing each text: pre-writing, writing-up, post-writing 3- features of texts: ideas, language (vocabulary and grammar), and organisation
5. 4 Voice in blog texts	Use of transliteration Use of cultural expressions Mixing Arabic with English Expressions.

Table 5.1: Organisation of Chapter 5

5.1 Writer Identity

This section reports the position of the students as 'writers'. This concept is a tricky one that needs to be understood from the experience of the writers themselves because learning writing skills in a second language and assuming

a particular ‘writerly identity or style’ in that language, as is argued in Figure 2.3 (p.87), cannot be labelled as the same phenomena. The identity of the ‘writer’ is about re-negotiating their writer identity in the new language. The current analysis of the different texts will show that numerous examples of writer identity have emerged through the participants’ writing process.

5.1.1 Writer identity when writing an Academic Essay

During writing academic texts, the students showed a tendency to develop either a ‘technical’ or a ‘thinking’ kind of writing. Concerning the first classification, i.e. the ‘technical’ writer, this group comes from twelve out of the seventeen who undertook minimal work in terms of writing; minimal here is defined as writing one draft, and having a low response rate to teacher’s assignments on Google Classroom when the task was ungraded.

The students who took a more technical approach completed only the obligatory assignments on which they were to be graded. Sometimes, they showed lack of confidence when composing certain stages of the academic texts, which perhaps resulted from a lack of adequate practice when a chance was given. One typical example is Farah who was nonetheless aware of some of the teachers’ basic instructions. She also clearly spoke of the teacher’s instructions relating to the grammatical accuracy, the use of connectors, the use of the different resources, and organisation of an academic essay. However, at the personal level of writing, she was hesitant as to what writing meant for her. She articulated clearly that she has a good level in writing; however, she was unable to elaborate on what her strengths or weaknesses were. Also, she disregarded any importance for writing outside of the educational context. As for diary writing generally, she could not articulate any purpose or use of diarying for her as a ‘writer’. She expressed that although writing a diary seemed easy, as she wrote about anything, it was not necessarily useful for her as a writer. However, this comment is to a degree questionable as she did not engage in writing a diary and as such could not say for sure that writing a diary was any helpful for her as a ‘writer’.

This showed her to be a typical technical writer where she saw the text as a means to try different ways to impress the teacher. Further, in one of the writing assignments, she compensated for her lack of ideas with overuse of resources. Farah faced a problem in starting her own assignment. The observation revealed that she seemed reluctant and unsure of what to do when she was left without the teachers' guidance. For this assignment, her classmates were two weeks ahead of her and had already decided what would be the focus of their assignments. At this point, she had three resources about using technology in dentistry; however, she spoke of her inability to narrow down the topic appropriately saying '*the teacher doesn't like my outline. She say it is not correct'* (sic, interview). When I asked what about the next step, she said that she expected the teacher to help her but the teacher did not. She was looking at the three basic resources and seemed puzzled as to how to make an outline based on the information she had. When asked if the brainstorming helped her, she indicated that she did not think of doing brainstorming and looked confused as if preparing an outline was irrelevant, even though the class was taught to start writing with brainstorming and making an outline. She seemed to be easily distracted from the actual process of writing by focusing on the articles that were so full of information. She was more concerned with the new and abundant information, rather than self-generation of ideas, so she had no criteria for selecting and synthesising the plethora of information she was faced with.

Another example of writing that could be viewed as technical can be seen in Salma's text. In one of the tasks, she particularly gave attention to obtaining information from online resources. She talked about how to put all the information she sourced into her essay despite the fact that some pieces of information were displaced and some paragraphs started without topic sentences. Consider the following paragraph from her essay:

> "The value for International tourism, number of arrivals in Oman was 1,519,000 as of 2014. As the graph below shows, over the past 13 years this indicator reached a maximum value of 1,521,000 in 2009 and a minimum value of 817,000 in 2002" (yearbook of tourism statistics). Tourism is important for Oman and we give it attention. (sic, academic essay: Salma)

This paragraph is the third paragraph in the essay that is about the importance of tourism to Oman. She wrote a draft that contained no topic sentence and no supporting details; when I asked about the organisation of the paragraph, she said she had found interesting statistics and interesting quotes from an online article. Accordingly, she formulated a body paragraph specifically and pasted the quotes without any robust connection with the previous text. Her use of a body paragraph is formatted according to the macro organisation of the essay as having a new paragraph with an indented first sentence, not as taught by the teacher who required a topic sentence with detailing sentences. Those two examples show one important finding: it seems that the use of the external resources hindered the ability to rely on their own internal resources for the technical writers; thus content took precedent over either planning or message. Unlike her classmates, Farah did not start the process of writing with brainstorming, she started with external resources which left her unable to identify her own voice about the theme or the argument of her text. Similarly, Salma wanted to use the '*interesting*' data she found from external resources which prevented her from structuring the essay as emphasised by the teacher. As such, it was perceived that interesting 'information' could replace the act of hands-on writing.

There were, however, some exceptions from strategic or technical writers, for instance Eram and Nehad who could be described as 'creative' or 'thinking' writers. They depended on their internal thinking about the topic of the texts as well as exhibiting more criticality and reflection on their texts and were among the highest-graded students. They both were able to not only draw on their personal experience to expand and exemplify the main topic sentences, but also to discuss the topic in-depth with a personal reflection on it. Moreover, they were able to use a comparatively higher number of interactive and interactional moves in their academic texts than their peers, which will be explained fully in Chapter 6 – particularly in section 6.2.1. Their flexibility to include their own self in the text is shown through evidence of discursiveness with an assumed 'audience'. Indeed, comparing the two following excerpts from the students' writing will demonstrate the range of skills exemplified by these writers:

1- *Body paragraph: A big city has many crimes. Like a big city, a small town has many crimes. There are many weapons to do the crimes for example, a knife and a gun. A criminal in a big city using modern weapons to do crimes. In contrast, a criminal in a small town using old weapons. So, crimes in a big city are more dangerous than crimes in a small town. On the one hand, a big city has a high crime rate. On the other hand, there is a law crime rate in a small town. A big city has a police station to work on the crime. Similarity, a small town has a police station too. In a big city, police station use fingerprint, DNA and many ways to know the criminals. In contrast, a small town do not use all these ways.*

Conclusion: In conclusion, there are many differences and similarities between crimes in a big city and a small town (sic, academic text: Asila).

2- *Body paragraph1: Unlike nowadays, students are able to learn in specific places such as, schools, colleges and universities. Today, they can learn in a class and with more services. In the past, there were no services to encourage the place of learning. Another difference is the materials that are used in learning and teaching. In the past, they wrote in wood and they did not use pens. Nowadays they use papers to write on and pens. In the past, they did not have books to learn from. But today they have many kinds of books in every field. Also, today they are using boards and technology like smart board, internet and computer. In the past, there were nothing of modern technology to improve education.*

Conclusion: In conclusion, education is an important factor that helps in developing countries. So, the lack of materials and books have caused education in past to be very simple. On the other hand, nowadays everything is easy to get knowledge and help people to build their future (sic, academic text: Nehad)

Text 2 demonstrates a high level of self-experience and knowledge. The text is simply and clearly focused on comparison. An original feature of this text is that it goes beyond the commonly taught concept of essay whereby mere comparisons are made. This self-experience is clear in the conclusion where

the student reflected about the relevance of the current situation of learning to the overall development in life. Text 1 conforms to the teachers' focus on connectors and linguistic accuracy and variety; however, it shows less writer's voice and is overly descriptive. Perhaps it attained fewer marks because of the lack of evaluative statements and original ideas. The conclusion summarised the work simply to show comparison between two situations, which did not indicate any further implications resulting from such similarities or differences. Indeed, if the students had developed a functional understanding of the texts, they should have been able to engage with the topic and offer more analysis and evaluation. The data presents a contrast for how identity is revealed in the academic essay. Two contrasting approaches seemed to reveal that for some there is a focus on simply 'doing' the essay as a technical activity while others are using the essay as a means of saying something.

5.1.2 Writer Identity when writing a diary text

Most of the diarists exhibited a lack of reflectiveness or criticality even though the diaries were meant to be reflections on the students' own self-writing and issues relating to the perceptions of each 'writer'. The students either seemed to have been writing in a rushed way – particularly in the use of the reflective diary used in the current study by concise reflections, and few entries – or they simply tended to write descriptively. In Class 1, Teacher 1 commented on her students' criticality indicating her concern that the students were not used to judging or critiquing different topics, which showed very much in their texts. She assumed that this was related to the students' cultural background where people were less inclined to discuss different life choices such as religion, or politics. This might explain the continuous complaints produced by the students that they lacked ideas, and their appreciation of peer support on the texts (diary and interviews). To address this, Teacher 1 aimed to provide the students with ample information through classroom readings, watching short clips or movies and classroom discussion. This strategy was employed because Class 1 was obliged to be tested on the materials that were taught from the class book. Unlike Class 2, in Class 1 the majority of the students struggled to find information – usually for them external to the classroom (see section 5.2).

An example of a very brief diary:
Reflection 1 (February 26) *Teacher (name deleted) gave us a paper and she told us to write an essay to practice writing, because we have a writing exam after two weeks.*

Reflection 2 (February 29) *my level on writing is good. The problem that we have is the grammar.*
I: what do you mean by "problem in grammar"? Can you tell me what kinds of mistakes you make?

Reflection 3 (February 29) *The noise is the most common reason, because the noise depresses the focus and let you stop writing (sic, diary: Aref).*
I: do you have this problem in classroom? describe any time you faced this problem or a different one?

In those reflections, it appears that the student wrote one sentence in which the information conveyed was a summary. This occurred even though the students were reminded in the meetings of the importance of retelling the events rather than making general comments or descriptions about themselves. Additionally, I asked for clarification, noted under reflections 2 and 3, in reply to Aref's reflections, which were not addressed. This scenario was common with the majority the participants (thirteen out of seventeen student) who showed low engagement with diary tasks by only reporting in few sentences. Relating to being descriptive, there are four analytic categories that can be considered as accounting for this manner of writing. However, these are related to understanding of 'diary text', and are therefore reported in 5.2.

Conversely, five writers showed ease in producing longer reflections about different events in one entry. They readily responded to the comments addressed to their reflections. They can be categorised as writing in a **reflective** manner. Two diary entries about students' experience of writing an essay article and writing a project (i.e. long academic essay with references and additional paragraphs) will be considered below:

1- *the writing project categorize based organization such as Introduction, body and conclusion. Else, It categorize gramer and It has many words For example, 800-1000 words Also the writing project for your teacher has many serous and one body has 100 words and doesn't categorize many body (sic, diary: Salma).*

2- *I enjoy write essay more. I think essay is easy. I always have friends and and teacher help me. But the problem with essay is that I don't have a lot of ideas. I can write a lot in project because I read more and get more ideas from internet. I think essay and project is good for my writing. (sic, diary: Moza).*

It can be noted that the first entry is rather descriptive on format and length. In comparison, the second entry tends to revolve around thoughts, feelings, and reflections of the writer. The writer involves herself in what she says and considers the writing process for her closely. In contrast, the descriptive writer as in the first entry writes about knowledge given to her from teacher without considering what does she feel or think about it. Finally, it is notable to pinpoint that the same writers who tend to be **creative** writers (when writing an essay) are also reflective when writing a diary. This indicates that a level of writerly identity in writing and involvement with text are developed within those students.

5.1.3 Writer identity when writing a blog text

Self-awareness appears as a salient characteristic and was particularly obvious while blogging. Due to the fact that blogging for this study was the first experience for most of the participants, there was a clear sense of a wider exposure and publicity. In contrast to the diary task there was a strong sense of the 'self' in the blog community; the writer-bloggers often saw themselves as **culturally exposed to others**. For instance, they were able to indicate what it means to be an Omani blogger in the wider community of bloggers in different ways. Firstly, there was an importance given to be '*as themselves and not pretend they are someone else'* (interview: Eram). This was explained as the identity of the writer being transparent and easily detected by the reader,

stressing the necessity for any blogger to be as simple in selecting a topic (interview: Eram). As such, it was imperative not to write about things that are created (such as created story), rather to write about naturally observed or lived events or beings (such as personal story). In this vein, Eram justified her blog writing simply as selecting interesting events in her daily routine. This blogger was sincerely looking at blogging experience as an authentic way to represent what a writer wants to tell about oneself such as: a habit, a life trend, a favourite moment or a place. Another instance, Ahlam (sic, interview) wrote that " *its [i.e, blogging] different I need to write about things they like [i.e. online readers]. I want them to come and comment. If they comment a lot, my blog is good*." Ahlam talked about what it meant for her to write to others and the associated demands and expectations. For Jalila and Nehad, blogging made them think of themselves as messengers about their country by selecting topics that are culturally relevant. They talked about the unvoiced beauty of Oman that is unknown to many.

In spite of the affordances of the blogging activity in foregrounding self-awareness, a key in developing a writer identity, these students had to negotiate existing cultural norms in terms of gender relationships in the on-line space. This shows that the students recognised a particular position of themselves in a global sphere. It was clearly a dilemma for some students who still experience stricter spatial separation from the other gender. It was brought to the attention as follows: '*but the problem that happen to me is that my family does not allow me to use such programs like this because it has boys so how we can communicate with them so they don't know about me until now'* (interview: Nehad). This concern was certainly justified based on her context, but might gain relatively more acceptance because of the educational context in which blogging was conducted. This reluctance is, indeed, not uncommon especially in some parts of Oman, particularly those dwelling in mountains and near valleys or streams (wadis). This would explain why almost half of the female sample kept a minimum contact with males' blogs. They were discreet and refrained from engaging with some of the more interesting blog entries – although they recognised these entries as interesting. In line with this, Eram expressed her concern of being judged wrongly (as trying to befriend boys) as

she was extremely active with commenting with other interesting blogs. On a social basis, the male participants maintained the same level of distance from those female participants who did not attempt to comment on them to avoid '*girls from get [ting] upset when we talk to them*' (interview: Amjad). Nonetheless, this feeling may have been alleviated for some participants if there is anonymity in the blogging, as this simply positions the person as someone who is unknown. This was demonstrated because the college is a small place where at certain times they could meet, which creates connections in a way that is not acceptable. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that their discussion on this issue shows that what it means to be 'visible' to the other gender – whether in close proximity or at a distance – was negotiated on both a personal and, tacitly, on a collective basis.

To sum up, this section has reported on the main analytic categories about writing identity in differing texts. There are five salient analytic categories: technical or creative (surfacing in writing academic texts) descriptive or reflective (surfacing in writing diaries) and self-awareness (surfacing in blog writing). These are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but more likely that the demands and understanding of different text types paved the way to write in a particular way. Therefore, text is tackled in the following section.

5.2 Perceptions of the meaning of 'Texts'

Inextricably linked to the identity of the writers are the students' constructions of the 'reality' of each text from their experiences. In other words, what does it mean for them to be composing an academic text, a diary text, or a blog text. In doing so, this section shows the nexus between the writer as self-agent, and the text being formalised and seen in a particular way. It is noticed that there are three main analytic categories attached to this nexus: pressure zone versus comfort-zone, responsibility of text, and authenticity. Each text type is perceived differently; accordingly, not all participants felt equally comfortable composing each one.

The most common perception of the **academic texts was that they were centred on the perceived pressure of an 'outer' censorship**. This can be

explained through two interrelated points: a pressure to perform and a pressure from the grading system. The students repeatedly voiced their fear of making grammatical mistakes as in: "*I am afraid of mistakes, I am afraid if my teacher finds that I made this mistake so she will give me bad marks. So I have to be careful about my writing. I have to write the best. I have to write something that the teacher like. You know, convince my teacher because it is in classroom, the most important thing is marks. So I have to take care of my writing in classroom*" (sic, interview: Naif), which was largely beyond their ability to manage unless the students were trained on grammar extensively – a skill which can help them in the second drafts of the texts. For them, an academic text was governed by rules and regulations which can be seen in Eram's diary entry: *"I don't feel satisfied at all because I have to follow forms.. I don't know"*. This assertion meant that the students understood the meaning of composing an academic text; however, it may allude to the need for time away from this academic style while learning a foreign language and its skills so that precursory learning could occur through informal channels (Purcell *et al.* 2013; and Yunus and Salehi, 2012). In the current context of the study, it can be said that the only exposure to the target language was through teaching and the materials provided in the classroom, which could not be said to be completely authentic, as was demonstrated in the Context Chapter. Resulting from the current understanding of the participants that 'writing' is academically contextualised and formally structured, the choice of authenticity of text is essential to improve learner engagement and outcomes (Duke *et al*., 2006).

The predominant view amongst these student writers about the **diary text is associated with informal, emotional, and private content**. Amjad revealed some of his own reservations about this type of writing by saying that a '*diary is for girls*!' (interview: Amjad). In this statement, he was trying to explain that being emotional is not something he is used to being and by associating emotions with femininity he could not like writing a diary. To put it simply, the diary text is perceived as a more personal kind of writing, yet containing features of an academic text. There was a mixed understanding about the diary text: viewed as either unimportant or marginalised if it is a personal text (interviews: Nehad, Eram), or more academically featured in the case of

teaching it at the college (interviews: Aref, Mazen, and Naif). In the first sense, sixteen students – with the exception of one student who was introduced to diary in Cycle three – reported that they were initially introduced to writing a diary during their first year at the college. They were given the opportunity to practise diary writing under the teacher's supervision; however, this was only attempted once inside the classroom. In that opportunity, they considered a diary in contrast with its equivalent in Arabic; thus, they knew diary as a concept rather than through practical experience. This is not to say that the Arabic diary texts could be different, but to highlight that there is a direct translation of concepts from L1 to L2 which may lead to oversimplification and restrict its constructed meaning to that known through a first language. This indeed is different from a first-hand experience of writing a diary that sometimes is not practised in L1. Indeed, most of the participants had never written an Arabic diary through schooling. In fact, there should be a call for authentic diary use, as in the current study, where the diarist experiences its actual usage. Among all participants, the only student who practised it extensively over longer periods of her life was Eram who spoke of two experiences of educational diary writing and compared between them. Hence Teacher A is the teacher who first introduced her to diary writing, and Teacher B is the second. Teacher A taught Eram during pre-college in grade 11 at school. Teacher A required diary keeping for the whole academic year. Teacher A continuously checked the diary and rewarded the committed diarists. Due to this, Eram was prompted to continue the diary that year and the following year. On the other hand, Teacher B taught Eram diary writing during the first year of college. The teacher only introduced the diary as a form of writing rather than there being any expectation for diary writing to continue. Because Teacher B discontinued checking and reading the diary entries in the second experience, Eram ceased writing the diary. It appears that the teacher aimed to introduce diarying to the students; however, the way it was introduced contributed to a lack of clarity about diary writing and its purpose. Their lack of practice in diary writing can be seen through a tendency to write events descriptively. This can be illustrated by an episode at the beginning of the current study where the students indicated their readiness to write diary entries; a follow-up with the written entries proved they tended to write descriptive daily routines as in the following:

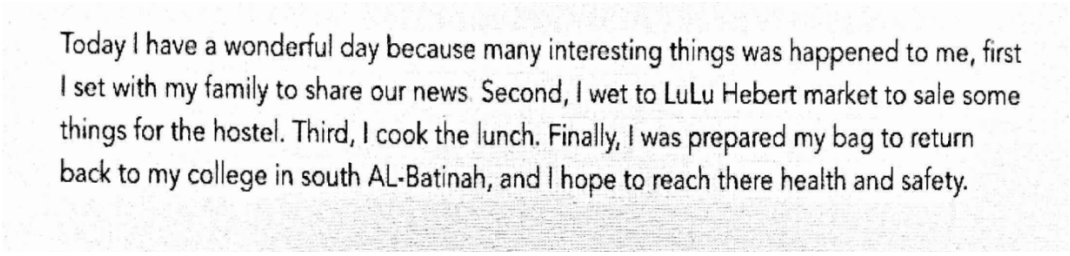

Today I have a wonderful day because many interesting things was happened to me, first I set with my family to share our news. Second, I wet to LuLu Hebert market to sale some things for the hostel. Third, I cook the lunch. Finally, I was prepared my bag to return back to my college in south AL-Batinah, and I hope to reach there health and safety.

Figure 5.1: Diary entry on daily routine

To sum up there are main analytic categories relating to point 5.1.2 that may account for a tendency towards descriptive writing in their diary: lack of opportunities to write diary (or any informal form of text), improper or insufficient introduction to the diary genre, the diary genre being perceived as emotional and girl-related. This leads to the conclusion that practices in higher education need to be promptly and thoroughly explored as closely to their possible results on the students' performances. Diary writing is yet to be authentically introduced and extensively employed in this context.

Thirdly, the perception of the blog text was as **serving a wider function** in comparison with the case for the other two forms of texts: academic and diary texts. The students themselves expressed their understanding of the blog text differently from the classroom-based texts. A feeling of ownership is one important function. For example, Sharifa articulated her conceptions as: '*in the classroom the teacher is the owner but in the blog you are the owner of your writing. In the blog you are responsible in whatever you write'* (sic, interview: Sharifa). The way she articulated her view of her teacher-self-text relationship shows the evidence that the classroom-based texts did not make her feel as if she was producing a text genuinely by herself, perhaps due to the feeling of control associated with classroom texts. Revisions on the texts were made with the purpose of satisfying another higher in-hierarchy person: the teacher. Additionally, she spoke of an understanding of being responsible for the text. This revealed that she understood the change in her role as a 'writer' and the more independent and agentic role she assumed while blogging.

Another feature that was valued by these students in relation to writing a blog was recognition by others through publication. This may mean that some

participants developed a sense of audience that is non-class related. For Samer '*it looks like a book, you have your topic, your experience, and when the book is published, the same when the blog is published. All the people see it*' (sic, interview2). In line with this, Ahlam explained more by saying '*I like writing a blog because I feel interest when I write a blog. other thing I think we can make it popular… other people can read and can interact with it. If there is a reader; I feel I do something'* (sic, interview2). Additionally, a sense of visibility and recognition was reported in association with the blog texts. She explained that '*I think I did something; other persons can see it*' (sic, interview2). This can be associated with the feeling of accomplishment. The texts have an authentic meaning for the writers.

To sum up, there are main analytic categories relating to the three text types: pressure, responsibility, and authenticity. The more pressure from a higher-in hierarchy (i.e. teacher) was felt the less responsibility of the quality of text was assumed, and less authenticity of the task was felt. With that, academic texts were teacher-associated and the least authentic texts, whilst blog texts were self-responsible and the most authentic texts. Yet, diary texts seem to produce a mixed sense by being labelled as girl-related, as an emotional form of writing, and as teacher-centred (i.e. if the teacher follows and checks then it will be written – but written with a teacher reader in mind). This results in practising writing diary as a classroom task not as an authentic form of writing.

5.3 Texts in practice

5.3.1 Academic texts in practice

In terms of writing practice, Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 required the students to write during lesson time. Teacher 1 divided the process of writing into individual tasks wherein the students wrote either in the planning stage, writing-up stage, or revision stage. After each step, they submitted their work to the teacher as they were connected to one main online classroom and the teacher received immediate notifications of the completed tasks. Feedback was provided individually and sometimes verbally or written on the blackboard for the whole classroom. Using a somewhat different approach, Teacher 2 began with a 30-minute introduction, in which she introduced one type of essay, its purpose, the

organisation, and a useful list of connectors. The students were taught three types of essay: argumentative essay, cause and effect essay, and comparison and contrast essay. Afterwards, a topic for practice was selected collectively by a whole class vote. Then groups collaborated to write one paragraph together while the teacher circulated around the classroom to provide feedback and support. These paragraphs were reported to the teacher who discussed them in a following lesson. At home the students wrote or completed the essay individually or parts of it, depending on students' speed in writing during class time.

A major difference between the two classrooms is that writing in Class 1 and Class 2 was contextualised differently. Writing in Class 1 was contextualised in terms of the materials that were taught. Teacher 1 devoted considerable time towards teaching new vocabulary, introducing new readings, listening to broadcasts, and clips of movies relating to three main themes: crimes, science, and business. As such, the students had to master the new materials to be able to write effectively around them. However, writing in Class 2 was generally contextualised to the writers' personal topics. The themes of writing were general to the writers' lives. As such, the students were not confined to bringing information that was classroom-specific. Consequently, writing was less focused on secondary resources yet freer in terms of ideas.

The process of writing an academic text, as known, is tied to what sense the students made of the classroom instructions. So, it is important to combine the student writers' beliefs about the academic texts and the actual teaching context. This section aims to draw both on reports produced by the writers themselves and on excerpts from students' academic texts. This will be combined with clarifications from classroom observation.

5.3.1.1 Pre-writing stage

In the interviews, fifteen out of seventeen students indicated that for writing an academic text it is important to start with an outline that is in the form of a Venn diagram or a table in which they listed their ideas. Those two kinds of brainstorming have been taught in the classes by both teachers. The students

expressed, in line with this, that putting down their own ideas before the start of writing is the most important pre-writing step. It was reported that this helped them to go through a smooth process of the writing experience as noted by Salma: "*when I do the first [draft] before I writing I do just process that diagram, while I am writing something it is easy follow ideas that I write before. Then I write quickly. Ideas are in the diagram*" (sic, interview). It was indeed useful for making a clear outline for the whole essay. All seventeen students did not struggle with distinguishing the main organisation of their academic essays (organisation is defined here as it was taught in the classroom in reference to having a thesis statement, topic sentences, and a concluding statement) (Teacher 1 and Teacher 2: interview). However, there were two contrasting scenarios emerging in the context of the current study.

The first scenario is the failure of the brainstorming stage to support idea generation. Indeed, many students reported that they have few ideas to write about, as presented in 4.2.2. This can be observed in the following two outlines on similarities and difference between opening a business or buying a franchise:

Outline1:

independent business	**buying a franchise**	**Similarty**
No Support and assistance	**Support and assistance of the franchiser**	**custumer**
No training	**own a business with a name of well Know corparation**	**profit**
choose the name of company	**close economic relations**	
fewer economic		

Outline 2:

independent business	**buying a franchise**	**Similarly**
Small independent shops in some countries	A franchise is a legal and commercial agreement between an individual and a parent company.	**play by the rules**
You do not have to pay fees	**You must pay a large fee for the start-up company**	**have all the experience and support of franchiser**
There is room for creativity and innovation	**disclosure information for more legal**	

Tables 5.2: and 5.3: Examples of students' outlines

The two outlines were submitted for teacher 1 before writing essays. It can be noted that both were not completed thoroughly enough to allow the writers to write a whole academic essay. Outline 1 contains more points of comparison than outline 2, even though outline 2 seems to contain longer sentences. The writer of outline 1, Badriya, complained that she '*do[es] not have enough ideas to write about'* (interview: Badriya). Although Badriya is from Class 1 and was introduced to numerous concepts and information about this topic of writing, she still struggled with forming ideas suitable for her essay. On the other hand, outline 2 contained insufficient data for comparison and contrast. There are very few points to discuss such as definition, finance and support.

Outline 3

Diagram 5.1: Outline of essay pre-writing

As can be seen in diagram 5.1, outline 3 contains loose ideas that are not further refined, detailed or exemplified such as modern weapons, professional criminals and use of CIS. Furthermore, at the level of writing-up it seems that the ideas, which were jogged by their presence in the outline, were used in the same manner without any rephrasing, or further explanation (see Appendix 5.1). The sentences were only 'cut and pasted' as if to show the teacher the student is aware of the structure of compare and contrast essay. This student expressed her struggle with generating ideas as in '*teacher should ask students some question that are related to the topic to help them to create ideas'* (sic, diary: Farah). She wanted a discussion on the topic before the students write their own essays. What is apparent in her outline is that she had enough information to write an essay; however, she needed more general statements with details.

The students of these outlines were able to recognise the need to enhance the quality of their ideas, unlike many of their peers who did not seem to be aware of the importance of the idea. Similarly, none of the teachers seem to highlight this issue as important to focus on (based on interviews and classroom

observation). In fact, both teachers demonstrated brainstorming on the blackboard as a pre-writing stage, but then having talked of the value of this neither teacher offered any feedback on this stage.

Additionally, different types of outline writers appeared. There were 'mind outliners' who preferred to write while thinking. Eram and Laila spoke of their writing experience as '*just writing whatever comes to my mind*' (interview: Laila). Eram reported that: '*actually everyone said that writing plans but I never did it. I directly start writing. spontaneously. I just like going with the flow, start writing the first one and the second one comes and keep going*' (sic, interview). It is evident that she recognized the use of planning but she stuck to her own style. For her, writing is a matter of placing thoughts on paper. This may indicate their confidence in their own performances. Additionally, this may have resulted from the fact that although the teachers introduced brainstorming as a pre-writing stage, there was not enough emphasis on it. As the observational logs reveal, completion of brainstorming or outlining stage was optional. Grades were allocated for the text as a product rather than for the processes of writing.

5.3.1.2 Text Features: ideas, organisation, and language

There are three analytic categories relating to the the writing up of the text: ideas, organisation, and language. These codes arise from both interviews and observation of classrooms. As for the first analytic category, **ideas** of an academic text, the data show that there were concepts around their quality and source. Firstly, students suggest that ideas should be strong, new and creative in order to write a suitable essay and achieve a good mark. Some of the ideas were said to be time consuming and difficult to 'gather' or 'catch'; yet others can be plentiful and even difficult to put down on paper before they 'fly'. For instance, some of the '*ideas come and jumping. I cannot catch them to organise them*' (sic, interview: Nehad).

Secondly, ideas were described as emanating from the main topic for the writing when the topic is perceived as interesting (diary: Amar), or close to the writer's preference (diary: Amjad), background or knowledge. On this matter, the teacher was seen as holding the responsibility of informing and providing

the ‘apprentice writer’ with suitable and new ideas (diary: Amjad). Also, ideas could be sourced from a peer working on a similar text, noting that this peer may not have wider perspectives about the topic; however, may have a different way of constructing major ideas around the topic (diaries: three students and interviews: ten students). Additionally, ideas were frequently talked about as closely associated with internet resources and books. Thirteen participants used external resources in the two classrooms to obtain ideas to talk about, with no evidence of the use of the different resources to focus linguistic or structural elements of the texts. Referring to the teacher, the peer and online resources for idea generation means that ideas were situated in the context around the writer. In other words, ideas for an essay do not have to be the writer’s own creation. In fact, this is an alarming point to consider as the more the writers rely on others to think for them, the more the writing experience can become painful as students’ own voice and messages would tend to be buried under others’ thoughts and messages.

Ideas can also be created and imagined. They are seen as transcending from the head of the writer to the paper, internally formulated. For instance, Nehad said that ‘*ideas come and jumping. I cannot catch them to organise them.*’ Similarly, Farah highlighted in her diary that ideas can be inspired requiring a particular suitable environment. Often, the idea can be ‘born’ in the midst of a quiet place (diary: 16 participants). However, there was a reported risk to including ideas that are ‘imagined’ when the writer runs out of ideas and starts fictionally creating details that are remote from reality, as did Amar in his mid-term writing test. He disappointedly spoke of the ‘negative mark’ he got as a result of this (interview).

As for the second analytic category, **organisation** of the essay, both teachers spent plenty of time highlighting this topic. Both teachers outlined the importance of having an introduction with a clear thesis statement overarching the organisation of other paragraphs called body paragraphs which then are followed by a conclusion. Looking at the participants’ academic texts indicates that, overwhelmingly, students attempt to follow this organisation. In the interviews, there was general consensus that an academic text should be

segmented into different parts as taught in the classroom. Sharifa noted that '*the teacher says everything depends on thesis statement*.' This indicates that she understood the function of the thesis statement as providing a clear organization of other body paragraphs. Additionally, participants seemed to show an ability to identify the exact position of the hook and the thesis statements. According to Nehad: '*to make the introduction, to make the introduction the fist I have to do it is to make a good hook so readers are interested to read the whole paragraph. Actually I am interested to write rhetorical questions in essays because that will let the readers have more interested*' (sic, diary). However, they did have problems in making the internal meaning at the level of sentences. For this, a topic sentence is not a topic sentence because it appears first in the body paragraph but because it functions as introducing the topic of the paragraph. Salma wrote a topic sentence in her text: '*Like a small town, a big city have similarities*' (sic). Similarly, Farah writes '*living in a big city is riskier than living in a small town because it has a lot of buildings*' (sic). Those are two examples of students who were trying hard to compose sentences that seemed like topic sentences but were insufficiently specific. A body paragraph taken from an academic text is presented further here:

> *1Living in a big city is riskier than living in a small town because it has a lot of buildings. It is serious crimes and professional criminals.2 There are many types of crimes in the big city like killing, stealing and other crimes. 3 Killing in a big city is more than a small town. 4 Also, it is difficult to the policemen to solve and catch thieves because it needs a long time. 5 But in a big city policemen can use modern ways to solve crime. For example, they use fingerprints and use CSIs' (sic, academic text: Farah, Numbers are added to the text).*

The first sentence, which is the topic sentence, implies that the following sentences are focused on demonstrating how buildings make living in a big city more dangerous than in a small one. Sentence 2 cannot fit as detailing a support sentence at all as it does not give details about anything. In fact, it is a general statement which might fit better in the introduction. Sentences 3, 4 and 5 give details about the redundancy of crimes, difficulty of catching criminals, and techniques. From these last sentences, it appears that this student does have 'real' ideas that could formulate a good academic essay if they were

thought through more clearly before being written. The student demonstrated knowledge about different issues related to her argument; however, failed to justify and properly show fitting examples. This student is classified by the teacher as a low-performing student; however, it may be argued that she failed to reach her potential and develop ideas appropriately due to insufficient time dedicated or lack of academic writing skills. On this matter she reflected that it was unnecessary to add any ideas after a first draft was completed. Even though a second draft is written, changes implemented were on spelling and grammar resulting in a text that has fewer grammatical errors but does not develop ideas further (interview). One important issue resulting from this, teaching writing in the classroom seemed to stress a linear approach of writing whereby planning occurs first, then writing up. This might be less supportive given that ideas can occur at all stages of the writing process.

This failure to address key challenges shows the need for more attention in teaching to the micro-level of the organisation of each sentence. By this, the student gains the opportunity to examine whether a sentence functions correctly as it is supposed to: a hook, a thesis statement, a topic sentence, or supporting sentence. The students in Class 1 had practised identifying different main functional sentences in a variety of texts by tasks that require them to *highlight the outline of the texts* (italics words are as in the original task). However, this task is entirely different from the actual involvement in the process of writing these sentences that serves a particular function. In fact, this task can be said to be straightforward as the position of the functional sentences in the academic essay is almost static, i.e. the hook at the start of the introduction, the thesis statement at the end of the introduction, and the topic sentence at the beginning of each body paragraph. This, indeed, is supported by what the students have articulated in the interviews in terms of their consensual understanding about the importance of the main functional sentences; however; the meaning implied in these sentences can be, in some instances, barely clear. This being said, it is suggested that the nature of the tasks alters beyond surface analysis of texts to involve production of functional sentences before starting longer academic texts.

It seems that the students should be better prepared and need to integrate the different processes of planning, drafting and revising in a more holistic way, rather than assuming a linear progression from one to the other. In this sense, the aim is that students are continuously planning, drafting and revising and using these strategies to match the text to an appropriate rhetorical purpose – a purpose that itself might evolve through the act of writing.

At this point, it is important to highlight that there were some particularly effective texts written by other participants who included clear topic sentences and sufficient support sentences. One good example of an academic text is written by Eram, who got an A in it (see Appendix 5.2). She had always described her writing as '*spontaneous*' that she '*goes with the flow of the ideas*' (sic, interview). In her academic text, she smoothly composed an argumentative essay in which her voice was clearly stated without seemingly any obstacles and both her macro and micro organisations are well written. However, it seems that the student was struggling to some extent in the micro organisation of the text. This being said, a short focus on her outline can exemplify her functional sentences. In the thesis statement she is not only directive by making it clear for the reader that the essay is going to be argumentative but also her argument is contextually bound by specific reference to the Omani context. She explains that her position is justified due to the availability of teens in place and time. In her final body paragraph, she either aimed to show her understanding of opponents' views or was apparently using the rebuttal technique but did not continue: *Obviously, the readers who oppose my ideas might say that teenagers are too young to deal with cars which are something very complicated to be dealt with* (sic, academic text: Eram). However, in the following sentences, she only listed other views that the opponents may have to her views. Even though she tended to adopt a less structured and less linear approach to the task as instructed by the teacher, the text was effective. This is probably because her focus is on what she wants to say rather than how to structure it. This being said, it is not only imperative to teach the students techniques like rebutting in an argumentative essay as the teacher did in her classes but also it is necessary to emphasise their functions and the possible sentences combined with them.

Additionally, Eram referred many times to the knowledge based on her personal experiences such as 'teenagers stay at home a lot', or 'teenagers are aggressive drivers.' Indeed, the use of 'aggressive drivers' was questioned by the teacher in the class and explained as reckless driving. It appears that she built other ideas on her experiences and added more explanations rather than simply referring to her beliefs. She continued writing that teenagers can help in emergencies as they are always at home and thus can be proactive. Another technique developed by Eram is stepping away from the described experience to make a more general point whilst maintaining the contextualisation. In this way, her own experiences were used to give insight and understanding as to what is going on in the context.

A third example written by Amar from Class 2, in the same class with Eram. In this class, the teacher used a text written by his teammates to demonstrate for the whole class how to reorganise ideas and to focus on grammatical accuracy. The students in each team took their group version and redrafted it individually afterwards. There are some points to discuss based on the following extract:

> *There are some similarities between living in an apartment and at home. One important similarity is following the same routine. For example, we eat healthy food. In our home we eat handmade food as in our apartment. Each one pay limited money to make Azbah: it is like assembly. Also, we have some furniture like bed and cupboard in our home and apartment. We have television in our apartment and we watch the programs that we watch at home. In our apartment we play station games. We also play station games with our brothers. We go shopping with our families. Sometimes we also go shopping with our friends* (sic, academic text: Amar).

It appears that this writer considered the topic from an introspective point of view. As such, he did not only engage in describing personal experiences, but also responded to the task's requirement where he demonstrated his knowledge on paper. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) stressed this in their psychological cognitive model of writing in which the writer presented both a 'content space' and a 'rhetorical space'. Consequently, the writer 'translated' his 'prior knowledge', as in the cultural reference to 'Azbah' meaning a potluck dinner for men and the description of home furniture. While this might be seen

as writing without a plan, it also demonstrates that ideas occur during writing. Thus planning may be something a writer has to do repeatedly during writing rather than simply before writing starts, which shows that writing is a recursive process.

There clearly remain many challenges to face in order that students may effectively engage with the writing process in the classroom. Firstly, there is inadequacy in understanding the task requirement in terms of organisation. Whilst students place a heavy emphasis on demonstrating to the teacher the macro organisation of an academic essay, they sometimes tend to overlook the meanings of each functional sentence, i.e. thesis statement, topic sentence, exemplification sentence and summary sentence. Secondly, as the students tended to prioritise a linear pasting of ideas, their emphasis shifted from the quality of content or ideas, and less effort on reconstructing them. This indicates that though redrafting occurred, it was directed to refining sentence structure and essay organisation. Therefore, top-down approaches of writing seem to have been favoured rather than bottom-up where more analysis of meaning is needed.

Concerning the third analytic category, there is a consensus among the learners that both **vocabulary and grammar** are important aspects of an effective academic text. They repeatedly indicated that linguistic features are the most important constituent of composition. Indeed, this was amongst the most voiced concerns the learners have. Naif, for example, said '*I when I write I stop. I have an ideas and limited vocabulary I face some challenges to complete my writing*' (sic, interview). Additionally, Jalila asserted that for her '*vocabulary play a role in writing process. In addition, a lot of student have creative ideas but because they don't know the suitable vocabulary they will leave the idea to another one*' (sic, interview). Indeed, both quotes emphasise that learning lexemes – meaningful units of language – constitute a prerequisite in terms of acquisition and knowledge before communication through writing can effectively commence. Because the students have limited vocabulary, they face continuous challenges to compose productive texts. To handle this, there

were varied strategies employed in the two classrooms to improve the linguistic use in the texts.

A very important technique was reading samples of their peers' texts that were submitted for their teacher's evaluation. This is related to the use of Google Classroom to submit the students' academic essays; however, this was a fortuitous affordance given that it was unintentional to allow the students to read their peers' submitted texts. Amjad, from Class 2 who submitted their essays on Google Classroom, reported that he read his peers' essays which, in fact, were accessible by all students in the classroom (interview). Though this is not ethical as peer students did not have the opportunity to agree to work to be read; he reported that this benefited him as he could see the language others used and consider the potential of improving his own text (interview). Indeed, as the students could read each other's texts they practice 'group reading'. As such, a text written in a particular way could be compared to another, perhaps, higher one to allow for learning from peers because a group represents higher level of knowledge which is then mediated to the individual, as in scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978). Practically, it is suggested that there is use of group reading and group feedback. This allows the students the opportunity to not only read their peers' texts but also reflect critically on what might be a better text. This requires provision of a higher level of guidance by the teacher who provides constructive feedback on each text, which can be accomplished by many useful online applications. Finally, it is crucial to note that the students developed their own strategies using the technology to support their own learning.

Another technique is translation which took different forms: dictionary, teacher-as-translator, and online translation. Firstly, the use of a paper dictionary to translate Arabic words to their equivalences in English. Amjad reported that he bought a dictionary this year to help him increase 'his vocabulary' (interview). He indicated the value of the increased knowledge of vocabulary on writing generally. However, this method was not exploited properly as the observation logs show that he never brought his dictionary to the classroom, even though most writing practice happened in classroom where the dictionary could have been useful. One explanation for this might be that the teacher did not

emphasise the role of dictionary in the writing classroom. Rather, she acted as a person who provided definitions in English, which, it may appear, is a frequent occurrence in the Omani context. But this support might be short-sighted as most of the students would not always have the teacher in front of them to ask her to translate more than a few words. Having a teacher to spoon feed students with vocabulary instead of designing a systematic teaching of vocabulary is pedagogically contested. Thirdly, online translation was introduced in Class 1, for which Badriya reflected she always used google translation of terms (interview). In fact, Teacher 1 demonstrated to the learners how to use google translation for extracting suitable words. She also pointed out that complete sentences and sometimes phrases are not properly translated by google translator; as such, it was wise for them to exercise caution. This teacher used a different technique which was group translation where students shared with the teacher their individual translation to generate a suitable list of useful words. This technique was used for translating both Arabic to English and backwards to check the accuracy of the English words that the students used. For instance, the students tended to write ambiguous words in the academic texts; the teacher then used to check with the learner what she meant in English and Arabic. Since this teacher did not know Arabic, she asked the whole class to try to give the explanations and the possible translations until the whole class were in agreement on a suitable word.

The data from the two classrooms indicate that there were differences in the techniques recognised by the students from those by the teacher. One student learned from his peers' texts and initiated the use of dictionary as a personal aid. However, the teacher introduced teacher-as-translator and google translator to the classroom. About twelve of the students indicated their need for a teacher to supply them with suitable expressions, especially as it was convenient in Class 2 as the teacher was Omani. Also, all the students, referred to the help which online translators provided. Despite this, there is no accurate measure to indicate which technique was more helpful or productive. Additionally, insufficient time – in terms of ESL learners' needs – was invested in using vocabulary stemming from these different resources. Moreover, the use of these techniques was opportunistic, i.e. when the student lacked the

suitable expressions to convey a meaning. Although this could prove good practice of 'translating' words to paper (i.e., putting words from mind to paper), this poses a real challenge that teachers in EFL contexts should be aware of: students may feel they have insufficient ideas, but in reality it may be an impoverished lexical repertoire which prevents adequate expression of the ideas that 'fly in their heads' (Nehad: diary).

5.3.1.3 Post writing: Revising Drafts

Finally, it is noted that drafting was mostly concerned with accuracy and error-free sentences. Although this is important, second language low-performing writers face other problems related to the clarity of meaning. As previously noted, one issue frequently voiced by the participants was the lack of ideas. But while idea generation and clarity would make a useful focus for revision, these students prioritised accuracy at every point in the revising and drafting process. This was justified by the perception that the teacher values accuracy above all other criteria (interviews).

Both teachers did draw attention to the importance of refining an academic text (observational log). In both classes the learners identified or simply corrected their surface-level mistakes. As for Teacher 2, she was not observed to have designed any tasks for error-recognition practice; however, she required the students to submit two versions of their essays in Google Classroom on which she gave feedback using correction symbols from: **Introduction to the Academic writing by Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue** (see Appendix 5.3 for the correction symbols). This list of symbols is both technically grammatical and an organisational list. It focuses on missing parts of sentences, organisation, and punctuation. As such it might explain why the students prioritised these aspects of writing, suggesting that it should be used in combination with a list focusing on meaning making and enhancing meaning. Perhaps also this should be incorporated alongside different classroom tasks designed to train the students to consider meaning making as a suitable focus for revision and improvement in their writing. In contrast, Teacher 1 employed a few peer correction tasks where the students conduct a peer review online with a personally selected peer. The teacher did not have any supervision nor any

control over this, rather it was a mutually-agreed process between the two students. However, when students were asked what they actually do during that task, they still associated 'drafting' with checking for grammatical accuracy. Despite this, many students perceived the experience of reading others' texts favourably as it allowed to them to focus on a different text other than theirs.

Notwithstanding their comments suggesting that they value peer feedback, unsurprisingly students tended to be more focused on teachers' feedback as the only trustworthy source of correction. The most probable reason for this is that though peer review can help strengthen one's own ideas by '*getting other ideas from friends*' (interview: Amjad). These learners were not linguistically able to identify their mistakes, let alone identify their peers'. They, indeed, reported that they only corrected mistakes in text that their teacher had highlighted as incorrect or unclear. On this matter, Teacher 1 reflected on drafting as being perceived as a '*correction process for pre-grading stage'* (interview: Teacher 1), believing that this was why the students did not make meaning changes or idea changes although this kind of revisions was viewed as important by the teacher. Actually, in practice both teachers themselves offered a chance to give correction and feedback in a draft preceding the final one. According to Teacher1, this is attributed to the '*fear of making additional mistakes if other ideas are added or if major changes are made*' (interview). However, there is no observed evidence that the teacher is proactively seeking to enable students linguistically redraft by themselves. As for the participants, they indicated that they only wrote one draft before submitting it to the teacher and a second draft was written to implement the corrections suggested by their teacher. Aref reflected in the interview that '*the first draft was in a paper and she [the teacher] gave us a revision and after that we write it on google docs I think online*' (sic, interview). Similarly, all other participants indicated that they did the same. For instance, Eram considered that reframing the essay for including additional ideas is not worthy; it does not add value to the essay. However, she said '*maybe I mention them (new ideas) at the conclusion*' (interview). Clearly, both teachers and students had different expectations about the text drafting process. Though the teachers wanted their students to

make more significant changes at the level of meaning and grammar; the students were mainly concerned with revising accuracy.

5.3.2 Diary texts in practice

The process of writing a diary was not staged into pre-, while, and post- text, which illustrates one important aspect of diary writing setting apart from other text forms. There might indeed be a place for simply writing which encourage fluency. Clearly, diary writing was perceived as important and helpful for helping the flow of the ideas for some students who articulated having this problem (interviews). For example, Nehad who was fully aware of her issue with lack of ideas, noted that '*online writing [e-diary] make us to write our daily routine and reflection without taking care of focusing of a style to follow like what we have done in writing class. Moreover, it helps us to develop our hobby and go ahead*' (sic, diary: Nehad). In her statement, it is clear that she recognised diary as a free form of writing by calling it a 'hobby' and by her reference to style-free composition. This means that diary writing represented a context which, albeit temporarily, freed learners from adherence to academic writing conventions. There is evidence of comfort of writing by use of simple day-to-day expressions, and plenty of contractions like: I'm, don't, can't. Therefore, use of diary as a form of pre-writing can benefit the writing experiences.

Even though this is in diary format there are still elements of formality. Ten students reported that diary writing was a chance to practise the elements of the English language such as grammar and vocabulary (interview). One student noted that writing fully grammatical sentences is important in a diary: '*when I feel bad for this diary maybe I don't write full sentence or maybe I forget something for day…I like to write my diary completely*' (sic, interview: Ahlam). In fact, not only she, but also her peers seem to write grammatically complete sentences as is noted in the diary texts. This perhaps suggests that diary writing in L2 has to borrow from the most common forms of expression that they have.

5.3.3 Blog texts

5.3.3.1 Pre-writing stage

Unlike writing diary, there was a sense of structure in the blog writing-up process. However, the process of writing the blog did not appear to be systematic with all participants. Sometimes the ideas appeared to be as on-the-spot decisions akin to the diary writing; and, sometimes it was more planned similar to composing an essay. This being said, each writer seemed to follow a particular style. There was, only, one writer who changed the way he wrote his blog, as will be discussed in this section.

As for the first and most typical category of bloggers, fourteen participants consider writing as one integral process in which they tended to use any opportunity that was considered likely to raise the interest of the readers such as taking a photo and immediately documenting the moment. For example, Eram wrote her blog based on her life and events as they happened. She reflected that '*it just entre directly into the topic. It is so fast*' (sic, interview). An additional instance is of Aref who thought of his blog as idea-centred. His blog was organised around a chain of ideas that were purposefully selected to show techniques he was using in photography. He wanted '*special effect on the reader that other blogs don't have*' (sic, interview). For these writers, it is not about the process of writing rather about the moment they wanted to document. Similarly, Amjad documented personal stories as happened along with his personal reflections. He reported that it was easy for him to write a blog as he selected unplanned topics relating to his personal life. Indeed, this might be an example of an authentic reason for writing rather than the production of school-based assignments.

As for the second type of bloggers, there were two exceptional examples where the students staged their process of blog writing through: firstly, photo selection, and then moving to write information about it. For instance, Ahlam reflected that she wanted to present and talk about themes in tourism but that it would have taken her time if she waited until the opportunity comes to take them personally; neither did she reflect on her prior experience as she explained that she did not have proper photos from her past experiences. Once she found photos from a

google search and from her friends and she gave a quick description of the photos. Similarly, Salma, reported that because her topic is specific to the introduction of a traditional Omani dish, it was not possible to wait for moments of cooking these dishes traditionally and at home because she would not find a good opportunity to document the moments personally in time. Instead, she first searched for photos, and then used her knowledge to build up content.

Nonetheless, there was one blogger who showed progressive thinking about the way a blog should be. The blog started with entries that looked formal and moved to diary-like topics.

> *Only start writing about what do you think in your mind. I pay attention to my topic because I describe my topic and I want my followers to pay attention to have a comments about it. Before I write anything, I know what my followers need to read or want to share, or have a conversation about it. Then I think about it, have outlining in my head or like brainstorming about the topic then I will write* (sic, interview: Mazen).

This was described as moving between topics that bloggers like; however, later it became more reader-tuned and as such he had to search for topics not only self-centred and presented in a formal way to present topics that were interesting for both the writer and the reader. In doing so, he searched for common ground between him and his readers, blogging about events happening to him in his life that were similarly interesting for the followers. This blog showed a mixture of formal and informal writing.

For both kinds of writers, the students seem to use the same strategies as they reported that they wrote one draft immediately (interviews). Also, they wrote on the WordPress application without a second revision. Additionally, they used their daily language. However, in terms of selecting the topic of writing, some used the blog more like a diary while others used it to present information more formally.

5.3.3.2 Text features: ideas and language

As for the analytic category **ideas** in the blog texts, it is evident from their comments that the students felt at ease. They exercised freedom of topic selection of their own blogs unlike the case of the academic texts. They were

personally engaged in creating and selecting ideas for a blog text. For instance, Nehad shares her experience of writing a blog text by highlighting that the text is 'real' as it is from her own reality; it echoes her feelings and her life outside of the academic context. Thus writing represented her real life, her thoughts, and herself. Similarly, Jalila reflected that being passionate for diary writing is important. For her, this makes writing not a static topic like an academic text. She considered the ideas she selected for the academic text as forcing her to distance herself from her personal feelings. She gave this observation on the basis of her peers' blog texts. In fact, once she started with a theme that is meant to be informative for non-Muslims, she had to keep selecting topics within the general frame of her blog (interview: Jalila).

Additionally, for many of these students writing blog texts was seen as a free-writing activity more similar to diary writing than the academic texts. The students recognized that the ideas are not planned as they described themselves writing anything and everything. Eram noted that blogging became a forum for the exchange of ideas rather than writing to others. This was felt because when each one reported an issue, the others generally provided support and solutions. For instance, she posted about her struggle with using a newly bought iPhone. Amar showed her strategies on what to do and where to obtain support with the new electronic device. Perhaps blogging can be seen as largely congruent with the personalities and interests of this generation of writers. It did not feel for them that they were doing something extra, simply because it was required. This perhaps suggests that there should be increased opportunities for this style of learning and a wider range of activities to support language development which considers the student comfort zone for learning, rather than always making it a duty.

Concerning the analytic category **linguistic features** of the blog texts, it can be noted that there are plenty of incomplete sentences in most of the blog texts, which was not noted in the diary texts. This might suggest that the blog operated more as an authentic writing opportunity than the diary for the participants of the current study. Similar to the diary texts, writing in a blog was informal which is indicated by the use of a range of written forms. One common

use is the inclusion of contractions (I'm, don't, can't). This being said, it is interesting to note that several of the participants reflected on the use of the vocabulary in blog text as a means of language improvement. As Amjad noted: '*some of them [peer bloggers] write good vocabulary, new vocabulary that I haven't known before. say good and create words and explain more when you know for example'* (sic, interview: Amjad). For him, blogs provided a space for learning from others who were using a range of new vocabulary. This indicates that students are able to recognise strengths in each other's work and where they are willing to improve their writing, as in the case of Amjad, it may be a cherished experience to share their texts with a wider range of readership and writers. It is possible that, if sharing happens widely, negotiation of meaning with newly-bonded friendships could encourage the writer to think more carefully about decisions relating to the language that is used. In fact, it was shown that these students can think before they write by reflecting on how concepts might be understood by the recipient. It was reported that simplifying meaning was attempted rather than complicating it by use of complex terms. Eram, for example, reflected that '*I improved actually, I am trying to choose the best word, I am trying to choose a word that is not a complex word or difficult word, I know that our level in English. I am trying to use a word that touch the other heart. So simple. And in the same time it is a creative like something in a good way*' (sic, Interview2: Eram). This shows that the selection of the vocabulary is about novelty in reaching out to the reader. Here, a focus is given to terminology used on her blog, particularly because of her quote and because of her good performance in the academic text.

> *I have been thinking that life is too easy yet I started this semester. Yet I started feeling so busy to do whatever I wish. I took deep breath and walked through the door, it was the morning of the tough January. I said Hi to friends who I had not seen in a while. It was my fresh day and I knew that I'm gonna be here for the next four years in this town [city deleted], hoping that they pass too fast. Whatever, I didn't enjoy my first week so much for my own personal reasons. I returned home with a bad mood which could be fixed by a trip. So that pic was taking in UAE while having a very lovely day with my family after a very tough beginig. Also, it's not the idea of passing time in a quick way here but it's the idea of enjoying every second and that's what's I'm doing now* cheer** (sic, Blog text: Eram).

This excerpt is a complete blog entry where Eram discussed many issues with the use of simplistic descriptive and sometimes reflective statements about her start at the college. She drew on various events using direct quotes, as in *I said Hi.* She described her bad mood successfully by referring to '*tough January*', '*hoping they pass too fast*', '*bad mood*'. She was able to transfer the reader from her depressed situation to one more jovial by saying '*lovely day*', and '*the idea of enjoying every second*'. The terms are as simple as any could be; yet, the meaning is clearly communicated by a variety of terminology. This implies an awareness of register and response to non-academic audience by choice of colloquialisms and a non-academic register.

5. 4 Voice in blog texts

This section deals with the use of the English language authentically, i.e. real use of the language in life despite what is taught and practised in the classroom, by the writers in the Omani context. The Omani learner writers participating in this study tried to bring their background and experiences to the English language by creating a particular voice that is specific to the users and their context. Indeed, the use of language in this context was not exclusively what was learned in the context; it was about showing ones' culture in a new language. Learning this in a second language has a learner-specific extension given that elements of L2 can bear characteristics added by the learners themselves.

This learner specific voice had a particular set of characteristics: the students mixed their native language with the second language to facilitate communication. This was commented on as: '*sometimes when we mix Arabic with English it makes the comments more interesting. Sometimes we use prose from Quran'* (interview: Nehad). Indeed, it is interesting that on numerous occasions the students intended to give, perhaps, deeper meanings than what can be said in a second language by use of plenty of Arabic metaphors and verses from the Holy Quran. These are used in everyday talk in Arabic, and here they are kept the same when a discussion was conducted in the English language. Moreover, the students used a significant amount of Arabic terminology or concepts that are culturally-specific (i.e., Samen, Aressah,

Qasha, Azbah) without any attempt at clarifying them. Moreover, there was a relatively high-frequency usage of words that are Arabic specific. Examples include: *Inshallah* (if Allah is willing: used for hope that something will happen), *mashalla* (blessings of Allah: used to show admiration), '*Allah choose for me and didn't let me choose*' (Arabic supplication), or '*the best choice is Allah's choice*' (accepting whatever outcome submissively, satisfactorily, and thankfully), *learning is a good deed that will be rewarded by Allah* (translated: religiously it is known that doing any good deed with the intention of it for Allah's rewarded, then it will be rewarded by Allah in the Afterlife). The students used these expressions and similar ones ranging from the most popularly used (inshallah, mashallah) to the ones that are difficult to articulate for beginner writers. Sharing common ground in the first language, the same cultural knowledge and shared religious knowledge enabled them to combine these elements to create a conversation characterized and negotiated by themselves alone. Strikingly, there were occasions where I could not make sense of what was written until I requested clarification from the students.

There are examples of many terms that are transliterations as are outlined in Table 5.2. There are some expressions that are widely used in everyday talk in Arabic and can fit as a reply to many emerging situations. These include the use of the terms: *inshallah and mashalla*. In addition, examples 7 and 8, from Table 5.2 show the use of words functionally as the use of the English language became more interactive and accumulative, rather than written as one chunk.

Terms	Meaning	Functional context
1. Wajed helwa	Very nice	Compliment
2. 3oonj Al7elwa	Your eyes are beautiful	Compliment (reply to a compliment)
3. Hewa	yes	-
4. Ma zeen Eram traa	Stop it! It is not nice (what you are doing)	Joking
5. Waajed zeen Nehad	It is very nice (what I am doing)	Joking
6. Meen heen wayed	I am not that 'much' teasing you.	Joking, about the use of (y) instead of (j) as there are accentual difference between speakers of the Omani dialect of the Arabic language. Some replace (y) for (j).
7. Wllla yhmak	and Allah protects you	Supplication: commonly used
8. Amork taybah	As you wish, never think of it	This is a widely used expression to indicate that everything is fine.

Table 5.2: Examples of Transliterations

Because many of these examples indicate a sense of community that is highly related to their audience, a separate section is allocated to them in Chapter 6, see section 6.2.3. However, a selection of the writers' specific terms (Arabic, cultural, or Islamic) are detailed in Table 5.3. Each example is detailed in terms of its cultural and religious implicit meaning that it is shared amongst these students. These examples show that the students were using the English language to communicate using their own background, which made the blogging experience stand out uniquely from the other two text forms: academic essays and diary texts. Because blogging was highly interactive, it held a greater sense of socially and culturally affiliated understanding.

Expressions	Meaning
1.In your thinking only	Sarcasm to show refusal to a request or to an idea.
2. But I am afraid to go to your town it's scary (i.e., Bahla)	Joking that something bad will happen to him if he goes to Bahla. Bahla is a city known notoriously for its wizardry acts- whether these stories are true or not, no one can tell. However, when anyone wants to refer to wizards or witches they refer to Bahla.
3.but don't be afraid of pepper	Pepper –meaning chili which is always associated with a hard-tempered person or burning negative feelings that can a person cause.
4.Farah is the new Bahwan	Joking that Farah is giving away things to others. So she is as chariteous as Bahwan. Bahwan is known for charity for poor people.
5. I always interested to watch the most famous movies in the cinema with my brothers	There is a religious reference to girls/women who have to go outside for pleasure (in mixed gender areas) have to go with a male companion: either a father, a brother, or a husband. Although, culturally the older the girls, the more trust they gain, and consequently, going out is more allowed.
6. It is very sweet I like to eat it with a cup of Omani Qahwa	Mostly in the Arabic Gulf, it is custom to present to visitors any kind of sweet with a plain coffee; i.e., sweet and bitter.
7. Don't get driving license after this semester because they will (يامروك) a lot. (i.e., your family will task you with doing a lot of things)	This is an implicit custom as young boys are tasked with a lot of responsibilities once they can drive (missions that usually are carried away by the father). Likewise, girls are tasked with house chorus that the mother is used to do when the kids are young. As the girls are usually prepared at to handle the house responsibilities so they can handle these when they get married any time around 20s to 30s which is the usual age for getting married in Oman. As such there is a big responsibility shift around the age of going to the college (around 18 years).
8. Why not! You deserve more (equal in English: don't mention it)	This is an interesting contextual use of the English language by use of expressions that Arabic in meaning.
9. What have you already done for the life which is after this life?! *10. keep the tongue from saying things* *11. May Allah help you and gain the paradise at the end.*	These indicate the religious background that they always tend to include in their writing; 9 and 11 are about preparation to the life that is after this life which Muslims believe in. 10 is about holding the tongue from saying negative things.

Table 5.3: *Cultural Expressions in blog texts*

5.5 Conclusion

To conclude, the opportunity given to the learners to present themselves as writers was an invaluable experience that released a 'community' created by the learners where they were connected together and used the English language authentically; therefore, pedagogic attention might usefully focus on the 'real' usage of the language by the participants. Allowing the learners to test

their knowledge in practice means giving them the opportunity to develop a realistic use of the target language. The aspiration of the college is to produce graduates with attributes relating to the composition of good academic texts – texts that conform to the written conventions of academia when these graduates are faced with such situation; yet the quality of what is taught cannot be sincerely judged by mere aspiration, it needs to be attested in reality by giving the students the chance to produce the texts in authentic academic contexts. This study only allowed for authentic informal use of the target language, and can conclude with the students reporting that the blogging experience gave them a different taste of writing that they had never tried in classroom writing before. Overall, there was an agreement among the participants – in focus interviews – on their negative perspectives of the academic text as being a curriculum requirement which often does not bear a sense of the role of writing as a means of shared communication of any use or personal purpose to the writer.

Nonetheless, the different types of texts have inherent differences that were recognised by the students. The academic texts were seen as formal and sometimes stressful. This perception tended to inhibit the production of ideas because students gave a higher priority to the grammatical accuracy and the macro-organisation of the text rather than a sense of having something to say and a desire to say it. This suggests that early drafts of composition should not be graded and should not be checked for accuracy; rather, they might be checked for fluency, quality of content and clarity of purpose. Regarding the diary texts, they were conceptualised as having a more personal-dimension which was a relief for the students because of the lower concern with ideas generation, neither did they pay undue attention to accuracy. This type of writing was not completely considered as separate from academia as the students who appreciated the experience still demanded their teacher's feedback. Concerning the blogging experience, this seemed to give the students a sense of belonging to a wider community in which they aimed to share ideas and information where meaningful content is important regardless of the way it is formed. Inherent to writing academic essay, diary text and blog texts have different readers, which is detailed in chapter 6.

Chapter 6:
Audience in different Texts

This chapter presents writer-reader interaction in texts written by ESL low-performing student writers in Oman. The chapter, firstly, aims to clarify the concept of 'audience' as perceived by the writers. Then, it will cross-compare writer-reader interaction (i.e., sense of audience) in three different texts: diary texts, blog texts and academic texts. Textual moves are analysed, as described in Chapter 3 in the analysis section, in terms of two main categories: interactive moves and interactional moves. An important feature of demonstrating a sense of audience falls within the second category: 'engagement markers' which will be discussed in detail in this chapter. For themes presented in this chapter see Table 6.1.

Section	Main themes
6.1 Audience in three texts	1.Diary-related: writers themselves, others: educators and public (unknown) 2.Academic Essay-related: teacher 3.Blog-related: friends (known)- public (unknown). Inventive strategies for attracting Audience in blogs: Topic is creative, interesting, related to life of reader, cultural. Vocabulary is strong, 'creative', day-to-day. Visual illustration by use of photos: mostly personally taken, mostly related to personal life (cannot be found on online search engines),
6.2 Text features	-Some text features are taught as academic or non-academic features, -Some are not taught - students improvised new features for blog audience: exclamation markers, metaphor and emoji

Table 6.1: Organisation of Chapter 6

6.1 Audience: Perception and Practice

This section details what the writers reported about their perceived 'audience'. Hence, it includes their reflections on how they aimed to produce texts suitable for their 'audience'. 'Audience' is analysed in three different genres: diary texts, academic essay texts, and blog texts.

6.1.1 'Audience' in Diary

Firstly, 'audience' in diary texts can be said to be varied. When the diarists were asked about who is the reader of their diaries, the participants pinpointed different 'readers' that came into their minds when they wrote the diaries. Consequently, this affected the written content dramatically. There was, indeed, a debate in the group interview about the influence of the audience and the content. Regarding this, the participants distinguished between three main readers for their diaries. The first one is 'oneself'; second one is the educator (i.e, teacher and researcher) and the third is a 'public reader'. Firstly, only four reported that they wrote for themselves, being genuinely involved in the writing, passionate about writing and developing confidence in their writing identity. In reference to writer identity in 5.1, those who described audience of diary as oneself fall within the creative writers. Generally, the students were able to argue as to the strengths of their written texts and were clearly able to state their own writing 'identity.' Badriya for instance even demanded that the teacher give fewer corrections about the organisation of the essay and give more attention to the quality and strength of content. She also pointed out the danger that correction on organisation so early in writing reduced the originality of her written work (interview). Moreover, diarists who considered diary as self-directed seem to be seeking opportunities to write outside the classroom. For instance, Eram had her own blogs in Arabic and English. She had a diary for her college life, which was started one year earlier. Nehad similarly writes diary entries outside her college context and reported that she has attended some workshops for writing development at the college. These students considered the diaries as a type of free writing to keep a log of their life and for future reference. Likewise, Amar reflected that:

> *in diary you can memorize your moments... to remember moments of your life, sometimes you can discuss things that happen to you, you can talk about something which is funny, or an important part of your life…so in the future maybe you will to remember what has happen. It is the same when your grandfather will tell about what happen in the past so if you write so who will know what I write will be good in the future' (sic, interview: Amar).*

This reflection shows that the student was relating a diary recording events with personal use. A diary became part of the diarist's life.

Additionally, another feature of diary for 'self-audience' is a private log of events where the writers expressed personal and private issues. The diarists called it a 'secret' log. For them a diary can be a 'close friend' and can act as a substitute for a 'friend'. Naif said '*some people don't have a friend to talk to him, so they write everything in a diary*' (sic, focus group). This statement identifies important ways of looking at private issues.

As well as the initiative taken to record a private log, there were many comments that show writers were aware of the 'self-directedness' of diary. For instance, all participants used a large number of self-reference markers; these will be detailed in this chapter in section 6.2. This indicates that there was a high level of introspective commentary on events. They understood that they needed to report or reflect on events as seen or experienced internally and for this they may seek to address or solve a problem. It is also the case that all of the topics discussed were personal, though with various degrees of personalisation. For instance, Nehad wrote:

> *How a nice day was! The sun was shinnig and I said to myself " Make sure it will be a nice day" So, it seems to me everything was going cool.!' Wrting class was good because today was my first step to slove my problem. In another words, today I have started to get the medicine! I think you are suprize! I mean a medicine for lake ideas. Also, today I attend an interesting workshop. I learend alot and alot. I am really very happy as a brid fly on the sky' (sic, diary text).*

Discussion of personal issues, internal feelings and self-perception similar to this one can be seen in many diary entries of the present sample, which is the contrary to writing in the academic text.

In contrast to the aforementioned self-audience, a further classification of the style adopted in the sample of the current study diary writing was the focus on the 'teacher' and educational purposes. Thirteen out of seventeen students showed less interest in diary writing. These students fall within the same analytical category as those in 5.1 who wrote descriptive diaries. Three students indicated repeatedly that they '*never liked diary writing'*. This justified writing few diary entries and little information in their diary entries. They had been introduced to the diary genre in the previous year; however, they had never done more than one reflection at that time. They reported in the interviews and focus group that they knew the purpose and possible positive influence on their level in writing:

> *As you know writing skill will improve it by writing I can share my ideas and my opinion about the topic. So, in my opinion I think that will help me to improve my writing skills (sic, diary: Mazen).*

For them, when composing a diary entry, it is not an opportunity to reflect; rather, it is an opportunity to respond to teacher's instructions and – in the case of the present study – for the researcher, who was also seen in the role of 'a teacher' as in this short reflecti*on: My teacher give me writing about crimes.In addition I learned about how to make sentence about constant,Similar and like* (sic, diary: Salma). In another instance, one of the diarists expressed that she was sorry for writing less than expected. This may indicate that the diarist was directing the content to the researcher and as such felt the content was inadequate. Additionally, her statement indicates that she was fully aware of the researcher's demands of the diary and considered it as a task. There was a 'teacher' directed diary text as the students reflected on many uses in the interview. Mostly, they considered it a task that resembles an academic essay that is defined by the teacher's criteria of a good written text. They also talked about the importance of diary writing in practising grammar and vocabulary. Upon asking about the value the current study might have for them, all participants reported that the primary interest for participating in this study is to practise writing.

Strikingly, when audience of the diary was predominantly the teacher, the content was rather far from personal or emotional. For instance, Laila who is evaluated as a good writer (she got an A in her assignments) yet not a diary keeper, indicated that she never kept a diary because she writes 'about silly problems'. She ended up getting rid of her diary as it is not appropriate to write about her negative feelings in paper. She justified that letting out her feelings did not make her comfortable. Likewise, Amjad particularly regarded diary writing as 'for girls, *girls like crying and that stuff*' (sic, interview). This has, indeed, a cultural aspect of text as to what is for girls and what is for men. This statement indicates that the diarist was aware that diary texts can have an affective association towards disclosing feelings. Indeed, it can be tricky to overcome gender bias where a lot of males may certainly benefit from diary writing. Arguably the process of writing involves making decisions as to a particular role of texts and henceforth adopting a voice. This also involves making informed and conscious choices about how visible to be as a writer and who the imagined audience is. Therefore, it shows the reader-writer relationship. However, among all participants only two were able to recognise this aspect of writing a diary, making it questionable that most students take informative decisions about their texts when writing for a teacher-as-a-reader.

A third classification of diarist relates to those writing for a public reader who is non-related to the educational context. One student clarified that: '*maybe if I write a diary and someone sees it*, they *will like it and decide to be a friend*. *It is a way to get friends*' (Interview: Naif). This shows the diary as perceived in terms of two main areas: firstly; publication of diary, secondly; socialisation and befriending. In this view, the diary is open and accessible by anyone. Moreover, the diarist was most probably referring hypothetically about the possibility of online means of publishing diaries in social media. However, in this instance Naif was likely to be talking hypothetically about the diary's purpose because there is no direct record in the research of use for developing friendships. However, the view of diary as carrying a social role by extending a relationship, whether a personal or professional one, with those who might be interested in reading or those who themselves write diaries is certainly a plausible one. This does show some awareness about a reader in a diary text and, indeed,

potentially gears the content towards that perceived reader. As for the professional readership, it was thought that '*also some of people like they write dairies and show it and share it with people and maybe will become popular*' (sic, interview: Amar). Nonetheless, it seems this form of diary text is beyond the aspiration of the teaching at the current context in which the EFL participants felt privacy as a major role of diary. Even if shared it loses its conceptual meaning as 'diary' following that it becomes more a topical listing of events (interview: Eram). Additionally, Eram – an able writer in comparison with her peers – reflected upon the prospects of publication, and considered that being published is something beyond the abilities of the low-level writers, even though social media can play a role in publishing anything. These views blur the distinction between diary and blog genres whereby diaries are considered private and blogs public. However, allowing others to read diary entries changes the sense of audience given that the participants did view a particular audience for diary entries. As a corollary, the concept of diary needs to be updated for the next generation as prospects of publish-ability means challenging conceptualizations of diary entry as purely personal. This indicates that in light of social and technological shifts, the parameters of genres can change.

Generally, participants reported that writing in a diary triggered a perceived 'audience' that have two main focuses: firstly; non-judgmental audience on the quality of language and content, and secondly; writing support generation of ideas. Both points have two consequences on learning. Firstly, there is a need for a learning space where ideas can take precedence over accuracy. Secondly, there is a need for learning spaces where ideas for writing can be tried out and can evolve. It requires the students to think differently about audience and clearly some of the participants could never think of audience as anything other than the teacher. In such cases these writing opportunities were considered to be challenging. This might mean that their teachers need to take more initiative in changing the reader-writer relationship for these kinds of writing tasks, such as providing opportunities for sharing personal responses to peers' texts.

6.1.2 'Audience' in Academic Essay

Typically, producing texts in writing classes induces an understanding of 'audience' as teacher-associated. Although these texts act as monologues, within the context of the classroom there is clearly additional communication between the teacher and the students. As such, the learner writers did not only endeavour to employ what the teacher taught, but also attempted to understand the teacher's beliefs about what constitutes 'good' texts. For instance, the participants remarked that their writing in the classroom served as writing '*what the teacher wants*' (sic, diary: Samer) or '*I am going to impress my teacher*' (sic, interview: Sharifa) which casts the teacher as someone higher in the hierarchy who has a significant influence on the text.

The teacher's presentation of elements of good writing shaped students' values. Having their teacher as audience for a written text influenced what the young writers aimed to include in the text. All participants reported using what was perceived as valuable for their teachers. They also reported that they tried to comply with classroom guidelines such as using new vocabulary, adopting conventional organization of essay parts, paying attention to sentence structure, the use of new conjunctives and the inclusion of references. For instance, Naser considered texts produced in classrooms as form-constrained and technical rather than experiencing 'real' writing. This student further explained that the content of his academic texts were changed and disciplined in a way that was only technical to '*suit what the teacher wants*.' Nevertheless, both teachers, in fact, did not only focus on organisation; indeed, they provided the students with adequate information to allow students to become acquainted with the necessary aspects of understanding essay type, organisation, connectors and useful vocabulary to start writing.

One consequence for trying to satisfy a 'teacher' as audience of the written text, some students became strategic while constructing texts. One example, a participant pointed out at the time of writing her academic text that: '*I want to make sure that my topic sentence match my thesis statement so when teacher read them can figure out what it is going to talk about. My teacher said that*' (sic, interview: Sharifa). For this student, she knew that she needed to write a

matching thesis statement and topic sentences. Similarly, Asila explained in the diary (a theme emerging from analysis of diary as reflective tool) the importance of signposting for the reader through organisation of texts. She talked about the role of each sentence that she believed to be important in the academic essay. She seems to be aware that there is a reader to whom different sentences of the essay should appeal as he reflected that: *the introduction gives the readers a little information about the essay… Also the topic sentences it's necessary in every body paragraph to tell them what is the paragraph about… The conclusion very good for the readers to give them summary of the whole essay* (sic, diary text: Asila).

Another important issue emerged from the data: there was a concern to meet the structural criteria rather than to engage with the ideas and the message of the essay. For that, there was an inappropriate faith placed in aspects that the student believed mattered to the teacher showing a difference between what the teacher wanted and what the student believed the teacher wanted. As an example of this, Farah was clearly over-referencing her text, more than her peers and more than the task requirement. At the start, she experienced a stumbling block in choosing a topic of interest and finding three main online articles. All her peers were ahead of her and had already started writing their texts. She collected three different articles about technology in dentistry; these texts were unrelated and needed to be narrowed down. She stopped for two weeks, unable to pinpoint a focused topic. In the interview, the student did not have other strategies to select her particular topic; unlike her peers who started with outlining and quickly became focused. Later with the help of the teacher who pointed out to her that she needed to brainstorm ideas, the student managed to complete the rest of the assignment smoothly. However, again she ran into another stumbling block; but this time only because she thought she lacked ideas. An inappropriate strategy used to address this was over-referencing her work – she was already using nine references. But because she was 100 words under the accepted word count, instead of rewriting and adding self-generated ideas, she sought more articles for additional information.

To conclude, thinking of the teacher as the reader can be a source of pressure – both positive and negative – on students. Participants want to match the text to their perception of what the teacher wants in order to convince the teacher they deserve high marks. Given that the teacher validates whether the written texts are suitable, this becomes a matter of how to identify what the teacher wants and accordingly put 'proper things' on paper. Writing risks becoming a process of choosing 'pieces' which the students perceive that teacher wants and then later pasting them together to form the text. As such, writing–in the worst case scenario–becomes a deliberate process of inclusion and exclusion of 'stuff' that may please the reader.

When writing academic essays, it can also be noted that values, criteria and framework of the designated audience, i.e. teacher, tend to infiltrate student compositions. Understanding and incorporating teachers' values was seen as occupying students concerns. Conversely, audience in diary is – at best – related more to the needs or desire of the writers themselves. As such, audience tended to be seen as imagined. For this reason, it could be empowering as it is left for the writer to be selective in determining what an 'audience' wants.

6.1. 3 'Audience' in Blog text

It is evident that students showed a heightened sense of audience role in blog in comparison with other forms of writing. Frequent references were made to readers and friends on blogs (in interviews). There are different shades and aspects that were expressed about 'audience,' ranging from true to imagined ones, though audience undoubtedly influenced what was written in the text. It included a sense of having something to share with others and a sense of how a text would be read and valued. The participants demonstrated some awareness that their written texts had a principle reader in mind. This reader was characterized differently as they keep a blog, which will be shown in this section – exploring contrasts with how a reader is perceived in the diary and essay tasks. For one thing, an 'audience' for a blog may often have been perceived to be someone who lacks knowledge, or is in search of and perhaps is interested in new experiences. In a diary entry – which was utilized as a

method for data gathering about perceptions as well as a genre to engage in – a student reflected that the theme of the blog was deliberately selected to inform and teach other readers about his own culture saying: '*I choose to talk about Omani food so, this help me to publish information about my country and others can see that'* (sic, diary: Salma). Another student said: '*I like readers as friends because they share with me their ideas, their information*' (sic, interview: Mazen). There is a sense that the students reiteratively talked about shared issues and consulted each other about general issues. Likewise, a different student reported that: '*reader is a friend or adviser because he gives me advices on how to improve my writing or he ask me about my topic or my blog*' (interview: Amjad). Similarly, another put it that: '*some writers put their experiences in their writings by that way readers can benefit from their experiences and knowledge*' (diary: Nehad).

Nonetheless, audience was evident as real and taking an authentic role in text writing and development. The students revealed a perception that when writing a blog, the 'audience' was active in building the communication in the text and was visible, i.e., where no longer does the writer write alone to convey a meaning as both actively contribute information. One participant reflected on the role of the reader after the text was published: '*of course, you will feel happy if you have followers like your blog and comment and want more information about what you upload to them. Ask you, and maybe you know and have information about this. And you can edit your blog and add this information when they give you'* (sic, interview: Amjad). This shows that the student felt whatever was written could be valued and significant. Also, Amjad highlighted an important technological affordance about editing a text after its being read by a follower; consequently, texts can always be refined for information. A text in this way can be collectively written and rewritten. This can be of great value for education to encourage peer and group discussion of posted entries.

The sense of authenticity and reality of 'audience' was described as not merely a concept but consisting of real people who, firstly, lived at a close proximity in the college as in; '*my readers are [name of college is deleted] students, most of them from my class and their first language is Arabic but we are trying to*

improve our English' (sic, interview: Laila). For her, she saw an opportunity that there is a sharing ground between her and her followers. Secondly, the audience was, for other students, distant demographically implying neither common features with the writer nor any knowledge about their possible knowledge. Obviously, some bloggers expressed their 'audience' as '*not Arab reader*' (interview: Salma) and '*friends from other cities in Oman, not my city'* (interview: Badriya). Because Salma allocated her blog to readers from outside her country, her topic was generally explaining different dishes about Oman. Similarly, Ahlam wrote about touristic places in Oman for any non-Omani. Interestingly, writing for a vague and uncharacterized 'audience' resulted in minimum reader engagement markers in the text, as will be shown later.

Another common belief when commenting on how an audience for a blog is perceived is to consider that an 'audience' was not judgmental and '*will not give bad remarks or think about mistakes*' (sic, interview: Sharifa), which explains why students repeatedly affirmed that there was no need to plan or correct their mistakes. In fact, Laila expressed her relief indicating she was not even aware if she made mistakes while blogging (interview). Issues of accuracy and fluency can be of importance, presumably that blogging can enhance confidence and fluency in a similar manner to diary, accuracy was of high priority when writing academic essays.

One very strong analytic category that emerged from coding, was that blogging changed the way these students were thinking about audience; in that a sense of 'audience' in blog entries and comments became more interactive and clearer than for other text types, i.e diary and academic essay. The students showed a sense of addressing an 'audience' which extended beyond merely employing appropriate textual features. Both the writer and the reader developed a code or special rules by which they became members of a particular community. Those who could understand the code and adapt their languages were members. These rules included a sense of what the reader wanted. On the whole, the students described their relationship with the reader *'as a friend'* with whom they share ideas or personal interests. Moreover, they were intentionally using a number of transliterated terms or expressions like '*I*

will bring jonia of dry qasha for you' [= a sack full of small dried fish]. This statement can only be understood by those who came from their background, and so implies a shared language and purpose. This particular example created a shift in the narrative style of the blog which did not fit naturally with what others had been posting about. It required understanding not only of the surface meaning but also the humour and rationale for saying it. It holds a cultural meaning as Omanis, especially the elderly, eat dried fish and prepare it in a special way. However, it is not a favourable meal for the younger generation who dislike its smell. This post picked up on a previous blog entry by a different blogger who explained one use of this kind of fish. It was more formal in nature when giving a recipe for preparing the dish, showing a shift in voice and style. It seems this was mentioned due to the humorous atmosphere and hilarious comments in the blog entry, which was on dried fish. This was justified by participants as a way to make fun and create a congenial atmosphere. Laila reported that it was imperative to create something different from the traditional classroom atmosphere (focus group). They wanted to laugh and have fun which does not exist in their classes, according to her.

Additionally, one characteristic of writing a collaborative blog was that they brought forward topics for discussion from their personal life such as '*The most thing that made me laugh is what happen in… [subject deleted]'* (comment in a blog entry). This led to consensus and explanations about what happened in their class. More than that, a new discourse community (Swales, 1990) was built with its own jargon, which seemed to belong uniquely to the group, as one student reported:

B: It is better to talking Arabic and English mix

F*: Yes, it's very funny. I like doing that especially in literature

B*: With…[name of a teacher deleted]

F: Exactly

B I spoke Arabic English in …[subject deleted]

[F for follower and B for Blogger, this is taken from comments section]

Another instance that showed how this writing experience led to a sense that the students were becoming members of a particular community was that not

only were experiences shared, but also recommendations were given and taken up. One example was of a blogger posting about two new fresh juices that are served at coffee shops and restaurants: melon juice and water melon juice. More than one follower indicated that they tried this juice just after seeing this post entry and subsequently shared their experience in the comments section. One follower comments: '*I have try to drink and I like it a lot. Every time I ask my father to bring for me'* (comment in blog made by Nehad). Another example of a blog entry which generated considerable interest among other followers related to making a kind of dish using 'Seedaf', i.e., an Omani herb found in the mountains. Some have reported trying it, whilst others expressed the desire to do so. Similarly, there was a post on fresh goat's milk and a different one on fresh camel's milk. These both received a high rate of responses. It can be concluded that a different understanding of audience leads to different kinds of engagement and different kinds of text and language use. As such integrating blogs as a means of writing in the classroom offers an understanding of audience as a facet unavailable within the academic essay. The interactive nature of blogging emerged through the interaction between the different readers, which carries potential for teaching and learning to animate discussions, enliven the teaching settings and offer a change in the traditional classroom settings.

6.1.3.1 'Audience'-specific strategies

One consequence of having a heightened sense of real audience in blog writing was the development of strategies to actively engage the reader. This is described by the students as wanting to '*grab the attention*,' '*convince the reader to read*' and '*convince them to be active'* in or with their blog texts (terms used by the participants themselves). These writers understood the process of writing as a force going between the writer and the reader. Admitting that there should be, in the written text, elements that can interest the reader (interview: Mazen). To this end, some of the students were able to create different strategies that made their blogs interactive with the readers, as summarized in Figure 6.1.

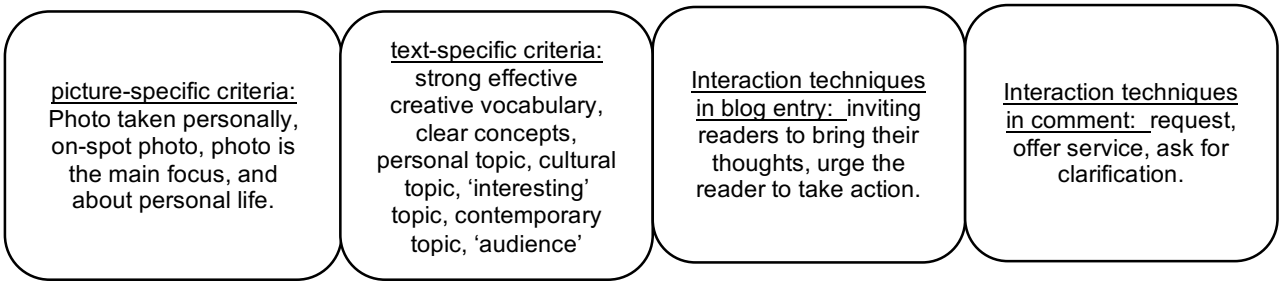


Figure 6.1: Strategies to attune blogs to readers

One technique to appeal to the reader's interest is through the selection of a topic the 'audience' might want to read. It should be, as Mazen reported, '*related to their [readers'] life or related to their studying in college, something that gives them motivation, give them advice to improve them*' (sic, interview). He wrote about themes of his 'audience's' interest related to drifting and speed driving. In another example, uncommon blog entries were written and followed such as: Seedaf, Qashah (i.e: small dried fish). Some other topics that were of interest to followers were related to the other students' college life such as: the study advisor, dinner at the hostel and goat's milk. Additionally, other topics aimed at giving general advice included the importance of education and being positive. These topics share a common thread, which is that the reader or the follower could relate to these topics personally. They felt genuinely interested about what was mentioned in a way that made them share back their own experiences and become active on these blogs.

A key characteristic of the most 'audience-engaged' blogs were that they were highly self-referencing. This was not merely achieved by writing about one's experience; but also by sharing a personal story with a general remark and invitation to their 'audience' to comment. Here are two examples:

1- *When we were as a child we had sth like this stuff. You tried to give anyone injection or listen to his heart beats as you a doctor. Yesterday, I tried to be veterinary doctor and give that sick goat injection. But, I failed in that and today's morning I find it dead . I felt sad about it and ashamed. So, what will happen if I were a doctor (sic, blog entry: Amjad).*

For this blog entry, Amjad was not only being reflective beyond the current situation by asking: 'what next?', but also, he was tying the current incident with

childhood play which many of the 'readers' would easily relate to. This, indeed, calls for sympathy and understanding of the situation. Perhaps, it calls for the readers to put themselves in the shoes of the writer. This, I believe, creates a common ground for both. Another tactic Amjad is using is to create smooth transitions between three main ideas: firstly, shared-background; secondly, personal story'; and thirdly, a possible and 'horrible' implication. This links to the next example:

2- *Do you like milk?!*
The milk is sth delicious and tasty. I like camels and goats milk. It makes you feel better wish that if I have a camel. Today morning, I helped my mother to get some milk from the goat. But, camels milk is my favorite . Try to taste those milks.
So, which kind of milk you like? (sic, blog entry: Amjad)

This blog entry bears some similarities with the previous one, as here Amjad wrote statements that have different functions for the reader, generating different feelings and responses. The functions of the statements are as follows: firstly, Amjad started with a general comment then moved to a personal comment, and a personal story; next, it offers advice, and finally it asks the reader to comment. This entry is interesting because it opens the interaction between the reader and the writer at three different levels. Firstly, the topic of drinking fresh goat's milk is unusual which was explained previously. Secondly, inviting the reader to take an action that is usual indeed triggered mixed responses in the blog entry. Thirdly, asking a question makes the reader share previous experiences about drinking goat's and camel's milk.

Related to the previous point is the use of an on-spot photo taken at the time of the event. Even this photo can be described as authentic because it is of the real event the blogger was talking about and it resembles things that happen in life naturally, but which are not usually documented by this generation. As a matter of fact, almost all participants said they were using Instagram to post their photos; however, these photos were well-taken to rally a huge number of likers and followers. The case of the present study was an authentic documentation of a particular event as it happened.

While blogging can create a sense of an authentic audience, it can sometimes be ambiguous as to who the audience is, which can create problems for the writer in making judgements about what is shared understanding and what is not. There were examples of unhelpful or misleading texts that did not give the reader enough or helpful information, which might be an indication of a lack of reader awareness. For instance, Jalila wrote about habits in Ramadan to an unfamiliar 'audience', yet failed to be explicit about culturally-specific terms like *Alfutor, Athan Almagreb, and Alesha pray*. Not only this, but also the blogger may set up misconceptions about Muslim practices when she indicated that only men do *Alesha pray* (i.e., night pray) whilst women do not. Clearly, this shows that students sometimes struggle to attune to reader awareness in all text examples.

Similarly, though there is a general awareness of the need to communicate beyond the students' own culture, the bloggers sometimes fail to wholly address the reader. For instance, a student designed her blog for foreigners and spoke of the importance of being explicit by providing examples and explanations of new terms. She wrote: '*Omanis people make it at eid ALfitr and eid ALadha,they make it by use fresh meat and the put for it a hot Spices. then they throw it in a big hole for two days'* (sic, blog: Jalila). Clearly, terms like eid Alfiter and eid Aladha were unexplained and wrongly capitalised. This indeed has serious implications on the part of the teacher on how and when blogs should be used to support writing. This also implies an issue for the teacher on how to establish different senses of audience for different blogging tasks.

To sum up, text types brought different perceptions about audience characteristics. For diary texts, audience was seen as the most varied due, perhaps, to the way it was taught in the classroom. Hence, its use in the classroom induced the understanding that a diary is to be shared at some point which may have inhibited the diarist from reflecting on personal matters. For academic texts, audience is educational and judging of linguistic criteria. This induced the perception that students needed to understand what the teacher values as good-text criteria. As for blogs, it induced an audience that is real, interested in content, and judgment-free. For this, some writers were inventive

in ways of attracting the attention of an audience through visual aids, extending space for the audience to collaborate, or the inclusion of unusual topics.

6. 2 Text features of writer-reader interaction

This part of the chapter outlines metadiscourse features in the three different texts, which are detailed in tables generated with the help of NVivo. The list of moves that are collected in texts are shown in Table 6.1 with exemplary words. For a detailed explanation of each feature, refer to Table 3.8 in the Methodology Chapter.

Textual moves: **1)interactive** **2)interactional**	Meaning Words used in the following manner:	Example
1.1-Transition (+frame markers)	Showing addition, contrast, consequence	Moreover, and, also, however
1.2- Evidential	citation	According to, said
1.3- Code Gloss	Reformulation	In other words, Particularly, specifically, this means,
1.14- Endophoric	Reference to previous texts	As discussed, as above, as mentioned
2.1- Engagement Marker	Pronouns that include writer and reader	We, you, imperatives and directives: should, must, see, look
2.2- Hedge	Speculation	May, perhaps, partly, seem
2.3- Self-mention	Self-mention	I, me, my
2.4- attitude marker	Show sentiment/evaluation/	Important, necessary, difficult,
2.5- Booster	Assurance	Definitely, surely

Table 6.2: Hylands' textual moves

There are a few important features related to the use of textual moves in texts. Firstly, transition words and code gloss words were taught in the two classrooms as important features of writing academic essays. Transitions were emphasised in most of the lessons, with less emphasis given to the use code gloss words. Both teachers made only limited references to the importance of defining new terms and providing examples when possible. Therefore, there

was limited scope for students to make use of these strategies. As for engagement markers and self-mention moves, both Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 indicated that the use of personal pronouns are not features of an academic text, which may result in restricting the use of these moves in the academic texts.

6. 2.1 Academic texts: Textual Analysis

Table 6.2 shows the frequency of the textual moves that appear in the academic essays of each participant. The data indicate a higher number of interactive moves than interactional moves, apart from a few students who used a relatively high number of interactional moves, as highlighted in blue.

Textual moves/ participants	Aref (A)	Badriya (A)	Eram (A)	Laila (A)	Jalila (A)	Nehad (A)	Amar (B)	Amjad (B)	Asila (B)	Mazen (B)	Naif (B)	Sharifa (B)	Samer (B)	Moza C)	Ahlam (C)	Farah (C)	Salma (C)
1-Transition (+frame markers)	10	13	11	6	16	14	18	12	9	16	14	8	13	16	8	17	23
2- Evidential	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3- Code Gloss	2	2	1	1	0	3	4	4	3	0	2	1	1	1	0	3	3
4- Endophoric	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
INTERACTIVE	12	13	13	7	16	17	22	16	13	16	16	9	14	17	8	20	26
1- Engagement Marker	0	3	4	3	0	0	42	7	0	7	17	0	0	2	1	0	1
2- Hedge	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
3- Self mention	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	6	1	1	0	1	2	0
4- attitude marker	3	3	6	3	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
5- Booster	0	2	9	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
INTERACTIONAL	5	9	20	10	2	1	43	37	1	7	28	1	1	2	2	2	1

Table 6.3: Reader-writer interaction in Academic Essays

The most common interactive textual move is transition, while the least interactive moves are evidential and endophoric. There are only a few instances of students using code gloss. This might be explained by the strict exposure to code gloss words. As for the interactional moves, it can be seen that the highest percentage lies in using engagement markers. The following

tables and graphs will detail the use of the most common metadiscourse moves.

The students are ranked from left to right from highest to the least marks. Thus, the higher performing writers appear in the left hand columns and the lower performing in the right hand columns. Interestingly, there appears to be no particular pattern as to the relationship between performance and use of the moves.

A list of the transition terms used in the academic essays is detailed in Table 6.3.

Transition (frequency)	
Addition: Furthermore (4), Additionally (3), As well(1), As well as(3), moreover (7), also (28), moreover (5), in addition (8), what's more (1), too (3), and (5), one (1)	Contrast and compare: Although (7), Whereas (2), In contrast (9), despite (1), while (5), But (13), on one hand (1), On the other hand (6), However (6), Though (2), difference (6), Similarity (2), Like (7), unlike (6), Similarly (16)
Frame marker: First, firstly, first of all, secondly (19) To begin with (1), To sum up (1), In conclusion (1), Finally (3), All in all (3), To conclude (2), At the end (1)	Consequence Therefore (1), So (15)

Table 6.4: Frequency of transitions used by the participants in their academic essays

It can be seen that diverse types of addition and contrast markers were used by the participants. These data are in compliance with what the students reported as important for the teacher. It can be immediately noticed that participants tended to use *also* more than any other transition marker. Additionally, markers for contrast and comparison seem to be used fairly frequently. This is in line with what was noted by the participants as important

to include in written texts in order to show their teacher they were using what was taught in classroom.

Table 6.4 shows four main categories of code gloss markers used by the participants in their academic essays. The two most common categories are using examples and making a reference specific. In this table, it seems that students tended to frequently use exemplification terms as follows: such as, like, for example, and for instance. The use of these terms was justified as showing the teacher that they were complying with the norms of an academic writing according to the instructions given in the classroom.

Functions	Examples from students' academic essays
Give examples to be specific	*For example*, we eat healthy food. *For instance*, our mothers wake us up and in our apartment we must depend on ourselves to wake up. some of my meals *like* breakfast and dinner at the same time. I use connectors *such as* (similarly, in contrast, like, unlike, on the other hand).
Make specific explanation	*Specifically*, in a small business. *especially* an independent business and franchise *in term of* possibility of happening and the reasons behind that.
Explanation of transliterated terms	Azbah: it is like assembly masjid (mosque)
Definition	Crime *is illegal actions that constitutes difficult problems in the life.*

Table 6.5: Examples of code gloss used in academic essays

There were only two incidents of using Arabic words and an attempt to redefine them in English. Firstly, the use of the word (masjid) was explained in the classroom by the teacher as acceptable to use in an academic text; however, the student explained the reason for transliteration was to make the text look formal and academic (interview: Aref). Secondly, the word Azbah (i.e., similar

to potluck but instead of each bringing a dish, they pay money for the dishes to be bought and materials to be cooked together) was used because it was felt interesting to bring forward a personal and cultural aspect into the academic text. The student who used this example further explained that academic writing tends to be impersonal (interview: Amjad). This shows their understanding of the importance of explicit and clear referencing. However, this does not show to what extent the students tend to use these when they are in an authentic situation of writing essays for an academic reader.

Looking back at Table 6.2, it is interesting to see that the interactional moves were not equally used by the participants, especially engagement markers which were mostly used by two writers: Amar and Naif. The two students used plenty of references to others by using words like (you, your, we, our), even though they may not necessarily have meant to refer to a particular person. However, analysis of the use of engagement markers indicates that they were incorporated to convey various meanings. Indeed, it can be seen in Graph 6.2, engagement markers are both active and passive pronoun references to the 'other'. This can be noted in the examples of (you, your, our, us, we) versus (it is apparent). Additionally, there is an attempt to refer to others' knowledge as in (as you know) which is different from simply referring to 'other.'

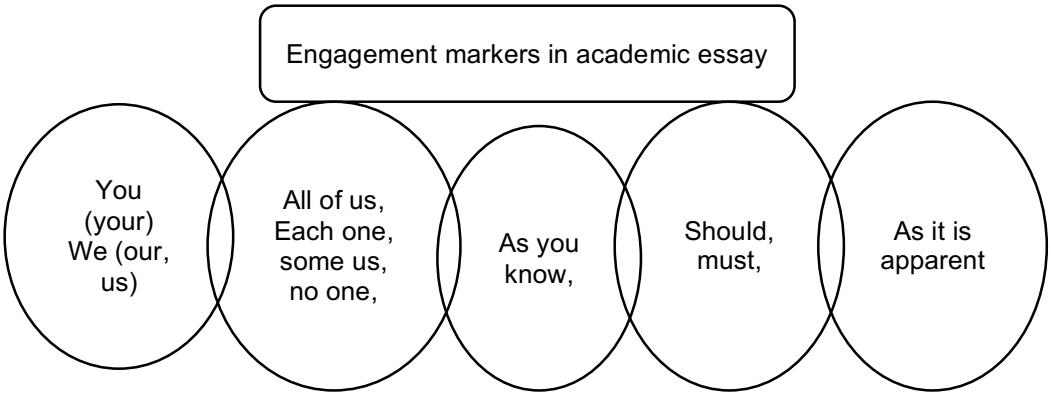


Figure 6.2: List of different engagement markers in students' academic texts

Moreover, it is not taken for granted that using different engagement markers necessarily means that the writers are referring to the direct or perceived

'audience.' It seems from their writing that some pronouns were used to denote a generic reference to anyone as in the sentence '*I advice everyone to think about these differences and similarities before choosing the suitable major for the future and where you want to study*'. The pronoun (you) did not essentially represent the reader who was in the mind of the writer, who was the teacher in the case of these texts. The writer of this sentence, indeed, thought it was the way a sentence is composed in the academic English language (interview: Mazen). This, to a large extent, may be attributed to mother tongue interference. Similarly, this interference is seen in the following excerpt from an academic essay:

> *When you studying abroad you become so far from your family and your country. If you are alone, you should do everything by yourself instead of you at home in your own country you might find everything free. You have to cook food, wash your clothes, and you have to learn a foreign language to communicate with other people. Also, you may lose your confidence to speak another language because the other people might not understand what you say.*

In fact, the level of writing is very basic. Hence, being able to reformulate these sentences to avoid pronouns would indicate being able to write more advanced and complex sentence. This raises a persistent issue as to the need of the teacher to not only clarify when to use an engagement marker, but also regarding the need to develop the students' level and performance further. Thus, more explicit teaching might be needed to reinforce this learning.

Finally, attention is given to the self-mention move; it is not very common in the participants' academic texts. However, one student has used 28 self-mention markers in his essay which is worthy of discussion here (refer to Appendix 6.1 for the academic essay). Sixteen out of seventeen writer used the self-reference pronoun (I) to introduce the thesis statement as in (I am going to write about, my essay is about) or in the conclusion to give advice or opinion as in (I advise everyone, my advice is, my opinion). A look at the essay that is highly self-directed shows an interesting feature about the topic. The student engaged in the topic personally and centred the topic on his own life and routine. Although there are ways to distance oneself from writing by reformulating the sentence; the student seems to not recognize that, nor was feedback provided

on this matter in the classroom. The teacher discussed the same excerpt in classroom by requesting the student to group the similar activities under one term and asking the writer to be more explicit by adding more detailed description. As such the task itself was about forming a proper topic sentence and adequate supporting sentences under it. In the interview, this student indicated that the topic is personal and worth mentioning. He also felt it was the teacher's interest to see proper organisation of the essay and internal paragraphs. Hence, the organisational process for him is crucial to meaning making.

6.2. 2 Diary Texts: Textual Analysis

As for the textual moves used in the diary texts, Table 6.5 shows a greater tendency to use transitions than other markers in the interactive moves category. It is important to note that these numbers are not comparable between the different text types because each text has a different length.

Textual moves/ participants	Aref (A)	Badriya (A)	Eram (A)	Laila (A)	Jalila (A)	Nehad (A)	Amar (B)	Amjad (B)	Asila (B)	Mazen (B)	Naif (B)	Sharifa (B)	Samer (B)	Moza C)	Ahlam (C)	Farah (C)	Salma (C)
1-Transition (+frame markers)	10	13	11	6	16	14	18	12	9	16	14	8	13	16	8	17	23
2- Evidential	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3- Code Gloss	2	2	1	1	0	3	4	4	3	0	2	1	1	1	0	3	3
4- Endophoric	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
INTERACTIVE	12	13	13	7	16	17	22	16	13	16	16	9	14	17	8	20	26
1- Engagement Marker	0	3	4	3	0	0	42	7	0	7	17	0	0	2	1	0	1
2- Hedge	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
3- Self mention	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	6	1	1	0	1	2	0
4- attitude marker	3	3	6	3	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
5- Booster	0	2	9	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
INTERACTIONAL	5	9	20	10	2	1	43	37	1	7	28	1	1	2	2	2	1

Table 6.6: Reader-Writer interaction in diary texts

Thus, it is not possible to indicate if the use of any move was more or less frequent in one text than another. However, it can be said that the use of

transition markers was higher than any other interactive moves in both academic essay and diary texts. Looking at Table 6.6, it is noted that the additives *and* and *also* were more frequently used than other terms to show transition from one idea to another.

Transition	
Addition And (106), Also (104), Another + noun One of+ noun (6), The most important thing (2), As well as (1), In addition (1), One more thing (12), Furthermore (1), too (4)	Contrast But (42), while (3), Despite (1), Although (1),Whereas (1), Nevertheless (1) On the other hand (3)
Consequence So (28), For that reason (1), Due to (1), As a result (2)	Frame markers First, second, third (29), Finally (4), To conclude (1), At the end (1)

Table 6.7: Transition categories used in the diary

There was only one attempt to write an endophoric reference where the diarist wrote 'as I mentioned before'; while there was a good number of code-gloss moves of around 47 moves. Looking at Table 6.7, the writers used a variety of code gloss to give details by use of exemplification words (for instance, for example, like, such as), rewording their ideas (I mean, in other words, to explain more), use of bracket, or specifying the meaning (especially).

Code gloss	Examples from students' diary
Give examples	*For example* we learn a new vocabulary from the class that vocabulary will help us to us it in our writing. Main ideas *like*, these statement, hook, topic sentences, counter argument and refutation. Connectors *such as* (similarly, in contrast, like, unlike, on the other hand). *For instance*, the environment which he/she grow on affects strongly in their writing
Rewording	*I mean* I am not too bad but not too good too. *To explain more*, if a child born in a family which all of their members are interested in writing, of course the child will definitely like the skill and nothing can stop him to write. *In another words*, today I have started to get the medicine!

	skills of language which is listening, speaking, reading and writing
Brackets	way of writing (follow Structure)
Specify meaning	especially with English lecture

Table 6.8: List of code gloss in diary texts

As for the moves in the interactional category, it can be noted that self-mention markers are the most frequent. In this subcategory, the students tended to refer to themselves using personal pronouns 'I', 'me', 'my' to talk about themselves or to refer to their mental or emotional experiences. Yet an interesting use is of the pronoun 'you' to refer back to the writers' own experiences. It is noticed that this use is associated with describing actions they ought to do in general which might not have been particularly specific to the writer at the time of writing. One example is:

> *'Of course, when you write an academic essay you should write it as formal shape. Also, the organization of your ideas and follow your plan. Moreover, you must take care about your vocabulary in your writing'* (sic, diary: Samer).

Additionally, there is a level of assertiveness expressed in diary texts. A wide range of code gloss moves can be traced, such as: definitely, really, there is no doubt, of course, actually, in fact, surely, for sure, absolutely, perfectly, certainly, have to/should/must, do really, honestly, and necessarily. The variety of words shows both the ability of some writers to recognise the importance of both added force by use of these words and going beyond mere listing of events. In other words, these writers did not simply describe events as they happened; but also got involved in the ideas they put forward.

Interestingly, the engagement markers that the writers were using in their diary texts do carry sense of an audience – other than oneself. There are quite a few occasions when the diarists seem to be conscious of a reader. The main engagement markers can be said to be of three different types. Firstly, there was a shift from self-talk to the addressing of others. To illustrate this point, three examples from three different diary texts are cited. Firstly, '*I could reallly write so deep with deep imotion If I were scare!!. Sounds weird right?!* 😁*. While*

I could not even write a sentence if someone bother my or if there is a lot of movment around..' (sic, diary: Eram). Secondly, '*In another words, today I have started to get the medicine! I think you are suprize!I mean a medicine for lake ideas*' (sic, diary: Nehad). Thirdly, '*I heard you should write everything happen during the day. I hope I done that well*' (sic, diary: Jalila). In these instances, the diarists explicitly address a direct reader. They shifted from writing about themselves to positioning themselves as readers. A second categorisation of the use of engagement markers in diary text is extending advice based on personal experience. Unusually Salma writes: 'Follow these tips for working outside and head out to your local park' (sic, diary). She attempts to expand her personal preferences to others. Thirdly, some diarists tried to show common ground between themselves and their readers by use of inclusive terms like: as you know, as we know.

6.2.3 Blog texts: Textual Analysis

Table 6.9 presents textual analysis of blog entries. As can be seen in the table, the interactional moves are far higher than the interactive moves. Similar to previous texts, blog texts show a number of transitions higher than other interactive moves. However, the use of these transitions is, generally, far lower than is seen in diary and academic essay texts.

Textual moves/ participant	Amar	Amjad	Ahlam	Asila	Aref	Badriya	Eram	Laila	Farah	Salma	Jalila	Mazen	Naif	Nehad	Moza	Sharifa	Samer
1-Transition	33	3	19	10	5	0	90	3	2	2	1	9	33	14	1	14	0
2-Evidential	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
3-Code Gloss	3	3	0	1	2	2	3	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
4-Endophoric markers	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
INTERACTIVE MOVES	**37**	**6**	**20**	**11**	**7**	**2**	**93**	**5**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**9**	**37**	**14**	**1**	**14**	**0**
1-Engagment Marker	91	0	80	28	2	0	73	3	2	0	0	7	91	25	5	10	9
2-Hedge	1	0	2	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
3-Self-Mention	130	0	123	32	0	4	208	0	5	5	5	9	130	17	4	16	10
4-Attitude Marker	12	0	11	4	2	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	12	2	0	0	0
5-Booster	12	1	4	6	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	12	7	0	0	3
INTERACTIONAL MOVES	**246**	**1**	**220**	**70**	**4**	**4**	**362**	**3**	**7**	**5**	**5**	**17**	**246**	**51**	**9**	**26**	**22**

Table 6.9: Writer-Reader interaction in blog texts

Yet, this excludes three writers: Amar, Eram, and Naif. There are major differences in the use of interactional moves in their blog texts from other text types. Firstly, the use of engagement markers has increased. Secondly, self-mention moves have increased dramatically. Thirdly, there are a fairly significant number of booster and attitude markers.

As for the transition markers, it can be seen that the meaning of transition words in communicative turn-taking diverts to uses other than those that are most typical. Written language became livelier and thus added more levels of uses. One example is the use of '*also*' in turn-taking texts which denoted not only '*to add to your idea'* but also to add '*now it is my turn to talk'* as '*F: Also, you like to try everything new*.' In a similar example, after a blog entry, a follower asks: '*But who bring for you a kami?*'. The contrastive word '*But'* is not intended to make a contrast; rather, it assumes a turn in the conversation.

The meaning of '*and*' in the following blog entry carries other shades of meaning rather than mere '*addition*'. These meanings are not worded clearly perhaps due to the second language barrier, although they can be inferred from the context. Indeed, there is a sense of attitude of 'showing gratitude' especially when we look at the written explanation and the personal photo in the blog entry.

> *Most of people like to cogratuate other by give thim gifts as a prize to continue achiving their ability. That gift mean for thim a lot, most of peole feel happy.*
> *<u>And</u> that is the time to said Thanks a lot. (sic, blog text: Moza)*

Transition (Frequency)	
Addition: And (107), also (28), moreover (8), too (7), else (1)	Contrast: But (55), However (4), Yet (1), On the other hand (1), although (1)
Consequence: So (21)	Frame marker: First, second, third (8)

Table 6.10: Transition markers used in blog texts

Moreover, the participants showed assertiveness in their blogs by use of a variety of booster moves, more frequently in the comments than in the main blog. Examples of the booster moves are: of course, really, actually, strongly, in fact, I am sure, exactly, actually, I agree, totally, surely, and frankly. Interestingly, a writer was trying to be assertive by the use of the Arabic word '*Wallah*'. Though this word is usually used to mean I swear (for asserting validity of what is said); it takes a conversational meaning in the context to mean '*surely*'. This is displayed in the following excerpt from a comments section:

Follower: No pic, dude
Blogger: Sorry isn't uploaded before You can see it now
Follower: Wallah, I still see nothing

In this textual turn-taking, there is a negotiation of meaning. Thus, the production of the word '*Wallah*' appears naturally as a way of asserting replies. It is important to point out that the use of booster markers is to show positions and agreements with the previous comments as in:

Follower: I think you can't find it easily
Blogger: Exactly!

In this interaction they were commenting on a popular children's candy which both had liked in the past. From the way the interaction is built, it seems that the topic was selected because the candy is not sold anymore. The follower was able to indicate something important to which the blogger agreed.

As for the engagement markers category, these are used extensively and variably in blog texts. There are four distinct uses of engagement markers which are particular to blog texts rather than diary texts and academic texts. Firstly, the writers were able to show affective relationships with their followers by addressing them directly, i.e., their names. In this sense, it is used as a way to call the attention of the reader. There are comments on each other: follower to blogger, blogger to follower and follower to follower. Sometimes, the interaction becomes dense so that they are commenting on different topics at the same time. For this, use of a name was appropriate to respond to that particular addressee's comments. This means that the comments become naturalistically

produced. Secondly, both the writer and the reader used 'informal names' which are often used among friends; such as: brother, my mate, dude, guys, bro, my friend, man, dear. These terms indicate how close they were at the time of conversing in the blog. One has to wonder if the reasons of this closeness are due to them blogging together. It is important to highlight that in their teaching context the students do not get the opportunity to converse with each other authentically – real conversation and social turn-taking do not happen. Thirdly, they employ 'context-specific' terms, such as: heart of the lion, baby and expert. Those three examples are coined based on the conversation they were having such as the following conservation:

Blogger: I thought you said that you want to sleep. All the best to you baby

Follower: You too bro

In this instance, the blogger is calling his friend a '*baby*' to indicate that he is like a baby in sleeping early. The word 'expert' was used to call a follower because he was trying to help the blogger in her problems. And the term '*heart of the lion'* was used to in the following excerpt:

F: take it easy my friend
Don't be afraid
B: I will, as you are
The heart of the lion
F: Hhhhh
every thing will be fine

The blogger was discussing the difficulties of studying at home during the weekend. The reply from the follower '*don't be afraid*' triggered a response from the blogger calling his friend 'the heart of the lion' in an attempt to show that he is courageous like his friend.

Fourthly is the use of the pronoun '*you*' in a meaning that disrupted the main category that Hyland (2005) makes in his sectional moves of reader-writer textual interaction. '*You*' was not the addressee as it tends to be used; rather it

was a generic form to indicate (one who is in the position the writer is writing about). A close look at the following excerpt from an entry blog indicates this:

> *So, they should follow these advice to be respect from others and no one can hurt them:-1-□respect the place you where you live 2-- respect people your teacher, friends and origen people 3-□ you have chance to get fun with other 4-□find new friends and enjoy your time with themm 5-□don't forget your aim ,so you have to study hard to has good certification. And so on… (sic, Blog text: Mazen)*

Similarly, in another blog entry:

> *we eat dates and drink water after Athan Almagreb because it is better to eat small things so that your body react positive after the meal. (sic, blog text: Badriya).*

What is noticed is that there is a shift from using the pronouns (they) or (we) to (you). This indicates they are used interchangeably in this context; however, it is clear from the meaning that the writer selects the wrong pronoun. Yet, this is one misuse of the pronoun within EFL low-level writers in this context which has to be considerably important when analysing their written texts.

The pronoun '*we'* was used in a similar manner to that described earlier. In the following examples, it is noticed that '*we'* simply refers to '*I and someone else*' who is mentioned previously, or 'I and someone else in a different context'.

> *1-In my family, we eat dates and drink water after Athan Almagreb because it is better to eat small things so that your body react positive after the meal. (sic, blog entry: Jalila)*
> 2- The same friend who cook dinner for us. (sic, blog entry: Mazen)
> 3- *When I started to return home my father take me with my family on a trip. (sic, blog entry: Samar)*

As for hedging moves, this category is rarely employed in the sample blog texts, though the way it is used in many other occasions indicates that the writers had the potential to employ them more often, perhaps if they were given the right opportunity to negotiate meaning and further instruction on hedging in the classroom. In the two classes I observed, there was no reference to the use of hedging. This is interesting, because it could mean that the writers were authentically negotiating meaning and authentically producing speculations rather than simply using them to practice classroom teaching. One blogger

comments: *It seems that your friends are good at cooking. It looks delicious (blog: comment section).* This does indicate that this move is not only known (even though is not directly taught), but also it is actually used when the opportunity allows.

6.2.3.1 More 'not-academic audience' Markers

It has been noted that the texts directed to the non-academic reader tend to be more flexible in terms of utilising a wide range of markers. These markers tend to be flexible as the texts become more informal. The concerned texts are diary and blogs; however, blog texts tend to incorporate them more extensively. As for the markers, they are not listed anywhere in Hyland's textual metadiscourse categories (2005). Additionally, these are considered as important and should not to be neglected because they featured in the highly 'audienced' blog texts. Further, they are part of the authentic turn-taking in real life. There are three categories of these markers: exclamation markers, metaphor and emoji.

Exclamation marks in both diary and blog texts indicate a meaning-embedded in the text. Quite often either the writer or the reader indicated surprise in their responses by use of exclamations as in: '*But there is no time!*', '*You are able*!', and '*Uncomfortable! You seem that you don't have any problem to try anything! That's cool*' (sic). This category shows that meaning was communicated by simply avoiding disclosure of their feelings directly. In fact, this conversation resembles a natural one where feelings tend to be understood or communicated by other means rather than explicitly stating them. Indeed, it goes without saying that this encoded feeling is similar to verbal tone in a communication.

The second category is use of metaphor in diary and blog texts to amplify the meaning of language terms. It seems that the learners were making decisions to freely use the linguistic terms without thinking about notional boundaries of formality. As such, in the focus-group discussion, Nehad explained that using these terms was for her more like her own nature; she felt the right terms to use at the time of typing her words were to make use of metaphors because they carry the meaning easily. Indeed, this is an 'authentic' language use where the

writer uses expressions that suit the context and suit the particular 'readers' without the demands of the teaching context to constantly be a formal user of the language around the teacher. Here follows a discussion of three examples used by the writers among other examples:

1-She will answer any questions you need but don't be afraid of pepper

It is interesting that these writers were trying to make use of the language at their disposal to communicate successfully, particularly as they were faced with a pressure to produce content that communicates feelings effectively and to produce content that is understood by a 'third-party' users. Some words were simply not at these writers' disposal, especially considering their current level. However, it seems that they were making substantial efforts to use their language effectively. Interesting is example1, where Nehad was giving advice to a peer to be prepared for any undesired comment from the teacher. For her, teacher's feedback could be as 'hot' as chili. This is a common metaphor for Omanis to indicate something which is difficult at a sensational level. If this statement is to be reworded, it will be: the teacher will answer your question, and you need to accept her feedback no matter what.

2-*If you afraid from sth, that thing will come around (sic).*

This, I believe, is a universal saying and not specific to the writers' context. However, it is frequently used with a negative connotation in the Omani context. It is usually said that 'when a person believes in something bad, it will haunt him.' This is how it is used in this context. The student is using the word (afraid) to indicate a negative meaning of the expression.

3-*will eat it الزمن/ Because [translation=because the time will eat it]*

This expression is entirely context-based. It means that '*it is impossible that I am going to eat it. It is going to rot because I will not touch it'*. Eram was confident about her language abilities which resulted in her confidence to play with the language terms. For the readers, however, it was difficult to understand

the intended meaning. The meaning was only understood after I requested a clarification, despite the fact that Eram and I come from an Omani background. However, from the context the interlocutor was only able to understand that she was refusing to eat the food the blogger was recommending. Indeed, the texts give an insight into the kinds of ways linguistic features are used among the Oman writers of English language. It highlights how these students used language naturalistically to negotiate a meaning with a reader. Interestingly, the use of language is, to a degree, culturally driven which was proven by the analysis of these texts.

A third categorization is the use of emoji images in the less formal texts. It seems the more the writer was involved in creating a meaning tailored to friends the more emoji images were used. For instance, those writers aiming to produce content for the wider public readers who were from distant places around the world rarely used any emoji images in their texts. For them, it seems that the 'audience' was only vaguely identified. Hence, the content became depersonalized. On the other hand, those writers who wrote for close friends were involved personally in creating meanings at different levels by employing emoji images. To exemplify this, an entry of a blog text is:

Seedaf

April/5/ 2016

Seedaf is a tradition Omani food. It's one kind of the delicious herbalists 😋 where you found in the mountains. When we put seedaf with other things, it will be a great meal you have eat ever. I advise you to try to make it 😉.
Now I will tell you how you can make it.
The components:
-seedaf
-solt
-onion
-omani bread
-lemon
-qasha (small fish that we put it under the sun to be harsh)
How to make seedaf :
First, put the seedaf and onion together and kibble them. Second, add to them the qasha , lemon and solt and kibble them again. Third, when you kibble them together add the omani bread to give a crispy taste to your meal. Finally, have a nice and delicious meal. Do not forget to let us help you to eat it 😊.

This blog text shows that the writer incorporates additional sensationalist content besides what was being described in words. The first emoji image indicates a delicious taste, the second indicates, perhaps, encouragement, and the third one indicates 'happy' or 'waiting patiently'. In other words, the last statement meant: 'let us share the meal. We will be delighted to join'.

6. 3 Conclusion and final Remarks

A clear finding from this data is that the EFL low-level writers largely showed sensitivity to the notion of 'audience'. Significant efforts were made to understand and embody the 'audience' in order to respond to their envisioned 'audience'. Furthermore, they used different strategies tailored to the specific audience. Also, it seems that even the most monologue-based acts of text production do have an embedded 'audience' in the task which is the 'created' understanding of the teacher. Additionally, the more informal the text the more interaction can be seen in it.

As for the technique of analysis, Hyland's (2005) textual analysis has proved to be useful in the analysis of 'purely' passive texts in terms of 'audience'. They are passive because they have only one way of addressing the reader. They are passive because they rely heavily on what the writers think and who they believe their audience is and; consequently, the text is formed with this in mind. However, this way of communication tends to be far from a 'realistic' one as it tends to rely on personal and internal interpretations of who the 'audience' is. Moreover, it seems that the writers, in the current study, are already aware of the main role of the teacher as giving instructions, correcting mistakes, and grading. Writing experiences in the classroom tend to be limited and raise a continuous negotiation in the minds of the writer as to what constitutes successful writing for the teacher – it is more a matter of creating a reality of the 'teacher' rather than creating a reality about 'writing'. This does not only situate writing as an unauthentic practice, but also makes the experience of writing in this ESL context very rigid and closely controlled, which may lead to a negative view of writing as a free composition process.

From another perspective, as has been seen in this chapter, the ‘audience’ does have other important aspects that Hyland did not explicitly investigate in his view of self-other interaction in the text. There are elements related to the real attempts to grab the attention of the reader such as the use of emoji image, or exclamation markers. This is because experiencing writing in domains outside classroom that are perceived to be less restrictive may offer spaces for writers to become more involved in a genuine process of topic selection, thinking about a reader, and a real involvement in text. This, indeed, calls into question the way the teachers position themselves in the classroom and the role they undertake. It can be an issue when the teacher-student relationship has further implications in terms of the experience of writing itself. Indeed, perhaps what influences writing is not the real teacher but the created image of the teacher.

This chapter concludes three findings chapters. By the end, it is argued that success in writing blogs can be translated into success in academic writing. Blogging can be a precursor and a bridge for writing academically. As academic writing tends to be more challenging and less natural for the students, writing a diary can also play a role as a reflective tool to enhance students’ ongoing personal thinking.

Chapter 7:
'Texting' outside classroom: learning opportunities and Lessons learned

7.1 Introduction

> "The ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments. Writing skills must be practiced and learned through experience. Writing also involves composing, which implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description, or to transform information into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing" (Myles, 2002: 1).

In line with Myles' thoughts, issues relating to the ability to compose are complex due to the nature of writing itself. A very important influence on the reality of writing stems from practices inside classrooms that are themselves directly influenced by the perceptions and values of teachers. Such 'ideals' or realities about writing are often communicated to students implicitly. Thus, writing becomes 'schooled' through realities originally held by teachers being re-formed again in the students' practices in response to their teachers' instructions. In this way, the writers' experiences continue to be shaped accumulatively. With the changing dynamic of classrooms as they increasingly utilise technology, these practices are changing and posing a new set of challenges to the roles played by teachers and students in the classroom. The aim of this chapter is to be reflexive on each role and on the understandings that they each construct about writing in order to inform effective applied practices in teaching.

The question that was asked at the beginning of the present thesis was: How do ESL low-level writers understand 'audience' while writing different text types in the Omani Higher Education Context. In light of what was presented in the

findings chapters, the three main elements of the main questions – namely writer, text, and audience – are seen within the political, social and cultural setting of the writer. They also seem to be influenced by the present practices of teaching writing as a foreign language skill, all of which present challenges as to how current applied practices can enrich the learners' experiences in order to promote their attainment of the sub-skills of written literacy.

Adding to this, the study aimed to explore understandings of a variety of text types from different writer perspectives, and this has helped to put into perspective many issues emerging from the modern era of teaching which increasingly employs the use of technology to support writing. This notion is important so that teaching can be advanced both locally in Oman and globally; yet this needs to be achieved with careful deliberation, not at the expense of other agendas in which teaching occurs. As such, the present study offers a meta-reflection about the complex agentic factors that are felt by the young novice writers as part of their experiences of constructing an understanding of writing and its demands. A reference to the wider context will be made, particularly in relation to theories and methods of teaching writing in the ESL contexts.

More closely, this chapter is divided into the main influences on current practice of teaching writing in Oman specifically. As the study assumes an approach aimed at understanding individual realities, and possible differences in the way of approaching "writing", this is discussed here with reference to relevant studies in the current field of writing in ESL contexts. Throughout this chapter, I also attempt to address possible practical implications that are relevant to the main findings in the previous chapters. In doing so, I foreground audience as central to the discussion because of the diverse understanding given to audience when students shifted writing between genres, and the three important elements.

7. 2 Understanding Audience in three genres

There are important issues reported in Chapter 6 on audience. Some of which include the heightened sense of audience in blogs, the mixed sense of

audience in diaries and the teacher as audience for the academic essays. These indicated a mixed and unclear understanding of audience in the differing genres. Additionally, this resulted in some poor audience-oriented texts, perhaps explaining poor quality in the writing of some texts, as an essential requirement of the set task was to write with the audience in mind.

7.2.1 Heightened audience in blogs

It was seen that the students did not reflect clearly about audience until they started blogging (section 6.1.3). Neither did they talk so intensively of audience and the direction to which their blogs were written until they started blogging. Hence, students used techniques such as imperative and interrogative clauses – similar to the findings revealed by Shamsabadi (2015) in her Omani students' blogs. This can illustrate the impact of placing a text within a social context of readers, and so drawing on the sociocultural perspectives of writing can shed light on the affordances of the blog genre. The explicit needs and direct response of the audience are thus foregrounded as a central affordance and as part of understanding blogging. This bears similarity to a study conducted by Huettman (1996) which demonstrated the benefits of having a clear audience in the business sector where the audience was a real client; it concluded that when this was the case the reports were written addressing clients' needs and that writers were better able to produce a text that parallels what an audience wants or is perceived to want. Clarity of audience and the need to adapt texts in order to be appropriate for a given audience distinguishes blog texts from academic essay texts and diary texts. Another explanation for this is the lack of the teachers' focus on audience inside the classroom; no reference was made in the classroom to such a concept, neither was there a clear task for students to interpret who their assumed audience might be. Typically, a general topic was given so that it could be narrowed down and written with a functional purpose such as identifying cause-effect, pros-cons, advantages-disadvantages, and for-against. But for each of these purposes the audience is relevant, so judging any advantage or position in an argument will always be relative to an assumed audience. The pedagogic tendency, however, is to see a text's purpose as generic rather than specific. Due to these

pedagogical choices, it appears that students did not directly consider audience as a relevant aspect of the writing task until blogging commenced.

7.2.2 Teacher audience interlinked with the role of teacher

The current study supports a conclusion that an understanding of teacher-as-audience can potentially be limiting the quality of texts; hence, only having a teacher reader to judge quality of texts is not enough. Thus, the role of a teacher who is both the provider of knowledge and the assessor of the set quality criteria inaccurately led to the mixture of both audience and teacher in the mind of the writer; which I believe is a possible reason behind the inadequate consideration of the academic audience. As will be discussed (see 7.4), teachers should not be seen as always representing a given audience because of their teaching roles, power relations or their role in assessment. Although it is true that teachers are responsible for giving marks, their role is to trigger understanding or thinking about audience and writing purpose as part of the rhetorical demands for their ESL students texts. It might be the case that revision and redrafting is associated with marking because of the teacher being perceived as the principle audience of a text. This concept of teacher influence being seen in the way students practice writing is important and has significant implications for the role played by the teacher. It suggests that some of the problems shown by the students are caused by what teachers tend to imply as indicators of quality, and what teachers mark or neglect to mark. Obviously, this has a link to power dynamics as discussed later. It is likely therefore that students become less concerned with how to persuade a reader of a particular argument and more inclined to consider what the teacher wants to see in a text. This in turn can act as a distraction to developing a true sense of audience which might be replaced instead by a pragmatic sense of marker.

7.2.3 Modelling audience in the Classroom context

An important issue that was not highlighted in the findings chapter is that the sense of audience expands in virtual classes where teachers' roles are as observers and mediators. This was especially noted in Class 1 wherein an online Google Classrooms was implemented for sending out classroom materials and submitting assignments. Indeed, in order to expand the sense

audience, it is critical to make use of the affordances of technology in Omani contexts. Al Kindi's (2014) study revealed somewhat limited use of wiki and blogs among a small number Omani teachers who tended to use technology in classrooms, while the majority were sceptical about doing so.

As will be discussed later in the section on power relations in 7.3.2, teachers' consciously or unconsciously exerting power in the classroom impacts the teachers' role, especially in relation to mediating teaching materials to ESL writers. In the present study, Teacher1 did not translate the concepts herself, but resorted to joint translation by asking the writer what he/she means and inviting the whole class to provide an alternative. Such an act ignited classroom thinking about and reflecting on their vocabulary. However, this joint thinking was not used in most of the other tasks where teachers tended to give out information and adopt more of a lecturing style. In Aram and Biron's (2004) study, an intervention was administered to promote literacy skills among early age (from 3-5) pre-school students, showing significant improvement in writing skills such as orthography, writing words, and knowledge of words. For this intervention, a trained mediator worked with small groups of four to six students in order to facilitate individual learning. This indicates that, as in this study, scaffolding can be effective. In this respect, more guidance and support for ESL students is needed.

7.2.4 Audience is sometimes hybrid

However, the idea of audience in the diary text seemed to be problematic for the learners sometimes. Perceived audiences differed (as shown at the start of Chapter 6), resulting in texts that were not clearly taking one style sometimes. For instance, diarists shifted from writing about self to then addressing a reader. Despite these diary texts being personal as participants confessed, they were also educational in nature – sometimes following structures such as topic sentences (i.e. main sentences) and supporting sentences (to give examples and further clarifications). There was sometimes a mixture of perceived audience in that diarists wrote about their lives but tried to show distance by description of events and avoidance of feelings in a manner similar to report writing. Due to this mixed sense of readership revealed in the present study,

and due to employing an open diary at the early stages of learning literacy in an L2 instruction, most of the participants felt unsure about the diary genre. Students are usually told that a diary is an informal and personal account of daily events of the diarist, but the teacher gets to see it. Hence, there are emerging issues relating to introducing writing a diary within educational context that makes it even questionable to call it an authentic text. So, teaching of genre might need to address both a sense of audience and adapt texts to address a change of audience. This may also include teaching the students the skill to create texts to meet an idealised or imagined audience.

7.2.5 Audience is a friend

It was shown in the results in 6.1.3, that the created community, i.e. blog, acted can be a sphere for practising and exploring self and engagement with others of similar interests. This clear use of text that is tailored to a known informal reader shows that those students were actually sensitive towards audience. This is important to develop in an ESL context where readers of a manuscript are not easy to find. Little investigation seems to have been carried out so far relating to how peers act as readers of each other's texts for the purpose of creating a sense of readership.

In the present study, not all students were able to articulate a vision of a clear 'audience' by indicating that they were writing for people who do not know Oman. In that case, their blogs looked similar to academic texts written for formal readers. In the same vein, Shamsabadi's (2015) study reported a contradictory conclusion that blogs tended to lack interaction with audience. Thus, Shamsabadi considered blog texts as diary-like. As Bakhtin (1986) explains, being part of texts is not enough to attract readership and response in the mind of the audience. It is not enough to think of every text as inherently interacting in their manner unless the writer makes attempts to adapt the text to convince readers and tries to appeal to them. This is an important aspect of ESL texts that are context bound by, for instance, type of audience for example a teacher as the reader of an academic essay is different from the public readers of blogs. As such, this lack of interactivity or dialogue in some texts

leads us to suggest – for teachers of ESL students – greater classroom opportunities which allow for the promotion of 'texts' as dialogue.

Overall, the online audience for a blog offered an alternative audience to the traditional classroom audience which tends to be mostly the teacher. The audience for a blog allowed writers to think differently about their messages and ideas with their audience more directly in mind. This extended 'space' for readers who also benefited from reading peers' texts. Hence, online texts became more interactive than those texts written for evaluation purposes.

7.3 Interaction in Text

7.3.1 Writer in text: self-reference 'I'

The idea that the writer's perspective or viewpoint might be visible in the text is often referred to as use of the authorial 'I'. For instance, Ivanic (1999) and Hyland (2002a) focused on the representation of self through direct reference by pronouns such as I, we, me, and my. This view of self in text is, indeed, highly relevant to the premise of the present study as text is viewed as a social entity that represents artefacts existing in real life. The choice of using personal pronouns comes with an interpretation of positioning the self in the text, although this may need a further clarification in the context of L2 learning, considering that it is easier to centre writing about oneself. Thus, use of 'I' is no longer about making a position clear by telling something about oneself, but it is rather that text types about oneself are easier to write. The studies fail to explain this in relation to what the students are really taught at school and the influence of that on how students come to produce sentences using 'I'. The issue with this is that the lower the level in English, the less the students are able to show stance and position through complex structure, passive voice, and engagement markers. So, more informal genres, such as blogs, can be a vehicle to practise and again a prerequisite before moving towards more academic pieces. In light of this, language learning is viewed as involving messy steps where the task addresses a number of skills rather than simply one. With this in mind, blogs would be useful for differentiation where more able students can incorporate more academic features while the less able can do this at their own pace.

Representation of self through use of personal pronouns such as ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘my’ distinctively varies in frequency over the different genres that form the basis of this study (see section 6.2.1). The most frequently occurring use was in the diary with almost 902 pronouns, then the blog with 698, and least in the essay with only 18. Notably, all occasions of self-reference in an essay occur by use of ‘I’, while different reference formats ranging from ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘my’ were seen in other text types. Additionally, the difference between blog and diary texts was only visible because some blogs were highly organized and more like an academic essay, which resulted in less or no use of ‘I’. It might be the case that for L2 writers, text types place constraints on which form is used, which is influenced by ideologies held in each pedagogical context about centring oneself in the text excessively. Both teachers in the present study stated assertively that pronouns are signs of non-academic writing; only when writing a thesis statement to show argument was the pronoun ‘I’ not considered problematic. In academic writing the passive voice is often preferred but this is unlikely to be the case in diary or blog writing. Nevertheless, the affordances of the different text types might have different aspects to offer to the developing writer.

Diary and blog texts provide opportunities for putting oneself directly in the text, unlike academic writing. Hence, the academic essay serves to develop more arguing from behind the scenes when compared with other text forms. Development of this ability might be appropriate after students are given opportunity to practice their voice (and stance) directly through diary, or blog texts. Indeed, stance and position cannot be developed in academic writing unless a clear idea of the stance on a particular topic is carefully thought-out. It is important to help students develop a position so that writing moves beyond a mere linguistic and rhetorical exercise. However, given that the data reveal that teachers in the present study were less interested in the meaning, this would therefore necessitate a shift in attitude for both teachers and students and perhaps a paradigmatic shift.

The importance of explaining authorial 'I' in terms of self-positioning comes from a linguistic interpretation in that it has its own particular position in the sentence to give prominence to the self. Hyland (2002b) indicates that this pronoun usually takes a 'thematic' position at the start of sentence. This view of 'I' in the text implies a view that writers socially position themselves in their texts. Because of this position, using the personal pronoun places the focus on the writer and the meaning of what the writer wants to argue. Through positioning the pronoun as the subject of the sentence, this focuses the attention on what is being said about the content; this presents challenges for L2 learners. In fact, in order for learners to do this, it is implied that they are aware of the linguistic system and how to play with language in use in order to convey meanings. Such issues are constrained by the teachers' role which tended to minimize students' voice in texts

Moreover, identity in text is often challenging for L1 writers, let alone L2 writers as argued by Hyland (2002a: 1094):

> "while L1 undergraduates often experience a gulf between the identities they must adapt to participate in academic cultures and those of their home cultures, this can pose a much greater challenge for second language students whose identities as learners and writers are often embedded in very different epistemologies".

Identity for L2 writers is more challenging as they are daunted by the new language and its literacy demands that they need to be familiar with. This is coupled by its cultural existence. Within an identity that is rooted in different cultural norms and thinking about writing and discourses, it is a representational matter to do so. The self is a matter of making an 'impression' according to Ivanic (1994) and Hyland (2002a). This was clear in the way Ivanic investigated the identity of a writer through textual markers, concluding that the text indicated that the student alienated herself as an apprentice academic writer by use of different academic textual moves, for example through the following: use of third person to refer to a general issue, use of abstract concepts, citation, academic conjunctives and academic lexis. Likewise, such academic identity is noted in the participants' academic essays (see section 6.3). However, few

cases of citation were seen on blog texts, with more informal selection of lexemes

7.3.2 Writer in text: influences on writing styles

One of the most significant findings of the present study is that it extended an understanding on how ESL writers write and the reasons assumed for their writing behaviour and style of writing. Two emerging styles of writing writers adopted were technical writers and creative ones (section 5.1). In those two types, the writers showed a tendency to question whether to judge by their own values or by the teachers'. In this respect, both project teachers played a more dominant role in demonstrating the characteristics of accepted texts. Some of the students talked about wanting to satisfy teachers' values in order to be marked highly and 'fit' with their perceived understanding of being a good writer, while others assumed more independent values. On the other hand, when writing informally outside of the classroom, more writers tended to be their own judge and relied more on their own values.

To shed more light on creative and technical writers, it is illuminating to refer to Kellogg's (1994) explanation of schemata, which involves the explicit and implicit role of previous knowledge in learning a language. In this case, the writers are assumed to have knowledge about the content, the linguistic aspects, and the social function on which a writer draws. The technical writers seem to draw on their explicit and conscious knowledge about how to write. The creative writers say that they 'just write', which seems to imply that they are relying heavily on the implicit knowledge (section 5.1). A similar writing behaviour is reported by Jones (2014) in her study students reported 'mental planning. In the present study, there were two students who resorted to such planning strategies. Those writers were also found to be more creative than their peers and involved personally in their texts by use of personal knowledge in their essays, while others depended on resources such as friends, teacher and classroom materials. The creative students state that writing just happens for them; in other words, they were easily transferring thoughts into written words. However distinct the two ways of relying on knowledge, this seems to be strongly influenced by the hierarchal role of the teacher as shown next.

7.3.3 Power-relations from the teacher

As was detailed previously, the majority of the study participants thought very much about how to respond to their perception of the teachers' values and expectations when writing. This indicates a power interplay between the learner writers and their teacher. In line with this argument, Buzzelli and Johnston (2001: 874) write the following: "we believe that however it is realized, it is a matter of fact that in the vast majority of the world's classrooms, the teacher possesses authority". They continue to argue that teachers assume a role of 'morality' in the classroom. Morality, as they explain, is what constitutes right from wrong including beliefs and values. As such, teachers bring to the classrooms what they believe to be right or wrong about teaching and have expectations in line with that. One issue emerging from the power taken up by the teacher is its impact on the role that a teacher performs. The concept of authority inside the classroom is deeply embedded in learners in the Muslim community where Islam urges learners to respect their teachers, and students are disciplined as being the least powerful individuals in schools. Students are taught the high position teachers hold and this is reinforced by religious conviction.

7.3.3.1 Training of teachers of writing

In the current study, teachers were not trained theoretically, neither had they been involved in the research of writing. Omani academic staff at CAS immediately start teaching after doing their masters abroad, which is undertaken individually and without guidance, particularly regarding teaching language skills such as writing. Most of the courses in the English Department at CAS are supplied with a course description, for which the teacher is given a high degree of flexibility in preparing reading materials and is able to support the students as s/he sees fit. This is, perhaps, driven by the assumption that language skills are the easiest to teach. Additionally, equipping them with course outlines and textbooks is seen as compensating for a teachers' lack of background to the subject. The danger, here, is oversimplification of 'writing' and reduction of important practices or tasks that may seem irrelevant. This, perhaps, explains why teachers are held as central for language attainment. A

number of studies in Oman based on surveys and participant perceptions concluded that teachers alongside the curriculum are viewed as central for attainment in writing skill. In her study on the perceptions of the reasons for the low performance in writing at entrance level at the FYP, Al-Mahrooqi (2012) reveals that students seem to hold the Omani educational system responsible for the failure of preparing them for their undergraduate study, as teacher and curriculum are considered the most influential factors. Similarly, these data were collected through questionnaires.

As a result, the focus of teaching writing is not clear and surface issues take priority over substantive ones when assessing writing quality as was reported by the sample. The teaching of writing requires more than mere teaching of materials but also requires critical observation and evaluation of each student's application of what is learned. Sometimes each stage of the writing process (i.e. outline, drafting, revision) is new or challenging and needs support. Supporting such extended writing skills in the L2 classroom makes more demands on the teacher than in the L1 context due to the absences of other qualified users of the language who could provide this kind of monitoring and gradual scaffolding. In many UK universities, the need to provide scaffolding for international students is recognised by providing them with a specialised team to provide support through one-to-one tutorial classes. A pedagogic implication to the current status at the CASs is to offer such programs by specialised teams that provide focused feedback.

7.3.3.2 Teacher influence students' values

It was shown that the two teachers had a strong influence on the beliefs of students as to what constitutes a good text. Students' thoughts of texts echo the perceptions of their teachers with a direct reference as follows: the teacher wants good grammar, the teacher taught us these words, it is important to have good vocabulary; she says that thesis should be clear. These issues stem from the teachers' assessment and feedback on texts or through their talk inside the classroom. Similarly, Ivanic's (1994) study reveals the tendency of students to actively discern the values of the teacher. The study participant formed her 'identity' in writing based partly on the teacher's opinions and values of good

academic articles. This shows that students are selective and continue adapting their texts to their contextual demands in an attempt to achieve better marks. Almost all participants showed this tendency to varying degrees, with one exception for this, Eram (described at the beginning of Chapter 5) who showed criticality regarding her teacher's feedback and voiced concern that her teacher only gives feedback on grammar. Perhaps, linking this to discussions of identity and voice in section 7.4, this is an indication that she had started to negotiate her own position as a writer because she is also described as an able writer and was among the highest achievers, showing sensitivity to audience.

Beyond this, there was the issue of teachers' lack of awareness of the students' continuous formation of identity on the basis of their own pedagogic practices in the classroom as revealed in the present study. As shown in Chapter 4 (section 4.2.2.2, The Role of the Teacher), both teachers were confused as to why their students did not complete sub-tasks posted online on google classroom (ungraded ones). Indeed, this issue is not specific to the present sample. For instance, Al-Issaei (2012) reports in her investigation on 13 teachers in one of CASs at Oman that almost all teachers showed no concern over the possible effect of their assessment criteria with the exception of one teacher who was wary of the implications the feedback criteria may bring. Al-Issaie reports a justification that was given by one participant: "Year 1 students still struggle with language and they lack the basic components required to fulfil writing tasks at the paragraph level. Students need to be well-prepared before they are asked to tackle a writing project of this kind" (2012:741). Hence, assessment can drive practice which impacts on student beliefs, but teachers can be unaware of both these outcomes.

7.3.3.3 Teacher's decisions influence text meaning

Teachers are the knowledge providers for classrooms, so their decisions regarding what to teach and in what order considerably affects what students think. This argument is illustrated by considering the contextual background to the present study whereby the introduction of teaching a diary in the Omani educational contexts had already been introduced as part of courses which were thought of as academic. The students in this sample therefore had already

been introduced to the diary in a previous year; but because it was not part of the current teachers' requirement, engagement with the task as part of this study was –as a consequence – limited. There was only one diarist who originally started a diary when at school and had continued the habit. The lack of teacher emphasis on the current diary task therefore seemed to undermine it as a task in the eyes of the participants. Another issue emerging was that the students showed a low response rate to ungraded academic tasks which also reveals how students decided what was important (if graded) and was not important (if not graded). This feeds into issues of constructing genres in education and how they differ from what the teacher intentionally aims to achieve. It also needs to be stressed that genre pedagogy should respect the affordances of each text properly (self-ness in diary, community in blogs). Hence, development of writing skills cannot assume a direct link to one genre because each text type has its distinct properties. This has pedagogical implications for presenting each genre type without altering its nature: an ungraded diary or blog can be used for other classroom activities, for instance: engendering identity, authorship, or voice.

7.3.4 Power-relations from the text

It was not only teachers' decisions that influenced writers' perceptions as to the meaning and value of any text, but also a writers' own perceptions. As was reported in the findings chapters, the students continuously projected their mental perception of the readers' expectation onto the text. For instance, prior to blogging almost all students held pre-conceptions about their audience (see section 6.1.3). They projected their own views about audience on the text, resulting in an audience that is imagined and 'personally driven'. One blog was dedicated to Ramadan (a Holy month for Muslims) and Omani norms which were dedicated to foreigners to enlighten them. Because the blogger did not know directly or have experience of her audience, she reflected in the interview that her audience is 'anyone who is interested to know'. On the other hand, the teacher was positioned by the students with the power of marking and thus controls the text – to a large degree – so that it conforms to academic regulations such as organisation, grammar and vocabulary. As such, academic texts demonstrated higher conformity to what the teacher requires. The able

writers were able to bring arguments and defend them by counterarguments in response to what the teacher talked about in classroom. I argue that those who were more in self-aware as writers were better able to imagine their reader and consequently were more effective writers. This was very clearly seen in blogs; one of the bloggers who was constantly thinking of his readers changed the theme of his entries from sports cars to college life. He justified this change, explaining that sports cars generate considerable interest among young Omanis and he therefore expected a high rate of response among his friends, yet later he found out that entries related to college life were the most interesting and started writing about that. As a result, he received numerous comments on his blogs. Additionally, students who knew who their readers were varied their written style in the following ways: asking questions, inviting readers to give their comments, bringing a funny personal story, or including a funny photo. In line with Hyland's (2005) concept of text as a metadiscourse containing negotiation of meanings, it is argued that the writer has an influence on the text. Therefore, and as seen in the sample of the present study, the more able writers were more successful in bringing their own perceptions of text and of audience, and their own knowledge into the text. This has been seen in the classification of writing presented in 5.1 as either descriptive (conforming to technical) or reflective (conforming to thinking and creative).

7.3.5 Classroom dynamics: Collaboration on text writing

Alongside the general dynamic of interaction from the blogs, it can be argued that peer relationships in the classrooms tended to be teacher-free ones, showing that the writers needed to communicate and bond with others. Many often relied on their peers for information and to reaffirm relationships of similar status and felt they were equally contributing to each other's texts. In that way, it is not only that texts represent personal values and interests (Canagrajah, 2011), but this is also reflected by supportive relationships which empower students to take control of their own learning. This is exemplified by group writing of texts where students collaboratively write one paragraph and then write personally. In reference to issues discussed relating to the role of teacher as a mediator, students gradually assume the responsibility for their texts, as such becoming increasingly empowered to produce texts independently. While

doing so, they are able to, for instance, search for new terms or convey different messages.

7.3.5.1 Peers are not experts

The present study identifies that learners struggled at the level of critiquing their peers' texts in terms of applying their teacher's criteria; hence, the students felt that they could not properly support peers. In fact, each one was rarely able to make more than surface-level changes, depending on teachers' corrective feedback on their texts. In line with this in a study conducted in the same ESL context in Oman by Kasanga (2004) on 250 university-level students, it was shown that students placed little faith in their peers' feedback based on a questionnaire, despite the positive view they held of having a peer reviewing their texts. In a wider global context where English is taught as a second language, the same results were corroborated where peer feedback was limited only to choice of tense, spelling errors or vocabulary as in Connor and Asenavage (1994). Likewise, in Salih's study (2013) the focus was on providing peer feedback on ideas. However, the results showed prominence given to structure and clarity of content. This cannot be seen as surprising as students themselves can be insecure about their language level due to their "inadequate linguistic and cognitive maturity to evaluate" (Sengupta, 1998: 25).

This point though might help explain an obvious issue relating to competency in language; it also should be considered together with other issues relating to the rationale of implementing such feedback. Indeed, ESL early writers should be able to be critical of their texts and those of their peers. However, it is not fair to compare the quality of their feedback with the quality of their teacher's. Caulk (1994) provides evidence to this argument by showing that only 19% of peer feedback was similar to teachers' feedback. In an experimental study, Riazi and Rezaii (2011) show that peers scaffolding types are similar to those given by the teachers; yet they are given less frequently by students. However, they attempt to make an association between the quality of texts and peer-scaffolding versus teacher-scaffolding, concluding that the group receiving teacher-scaffolding showed an increase in performance. To prove their assumption, the group who got peer-scaffolding was the control group and thus

were deprived from teacher's support. On this point, it goes naturally that depriving students from their teacher support does not lead to positive effects in terms of quality and specific assessment criteria. In fact, in order for groups inside classrooms to work collaboratively, there must be a teacher who provides a system of organizing peers work, according to Van Lier (1996). With this criticism of peer feedback in mind, the question of its value remains.

An alternative explanation of the value of peer assessment may be that the student who benefits from peer feedback is not the receiver but the provider of the feedback – it is the practice of reading and determining quality in the text of another that might inform future writing practice for the student's own texts, in reference to Vygotsky's Zone Proximal Development. This case was reported among some students in this study who reported that if we compare our writing with others that help us to improve it and know the way that they use to write an effective writing' (sic, diary: Naif). This was possible through open online classroom, which opens the possibility of optimizing such experiences of learners through online discussions. However, it was an affordance explained and exploited by this student only, as students were not supposed to read each other's submitted assignments. To inform writing development, blogs have the potential for providing a space to combine the roles of reader and writer. Because writing is used both to offer ideas and to comment on ideas, it also requires that the reader becomes the writer thus combining their roles. Indeed, if the reviewer is the one who benefits, then a context that allows for the two skills in a responsive and immediate mode might support the process whereby reading and evaluating the texts of others benefits one's own texts. This blurring of the role of reader and writer might also be informative in developing a sense of audience; by bringing the role of the reader into the mind of the writer. This also has relevance to a point that is discussed later relating to creating a community of readers (see sub-section 7.3.4.3 for further discussion).

Moreover, it was noted that students' collaborative groups were assigned randomly: either students choose their peer worker or according to the seating, which runs against Vygotsky's principle of ZPD. Within the framework of this theory, an important lesson learned from this practice – and to build on the

previously cited studies – is the need for a systematic joint writing where peers are assigned roles in tasks according to their ability to handle the task requirements. This implies for L2 writers that, more linguistically able writers can be resourceful to others. However, the fact remains that it is impossible for all students to be working with another higher performing student and, hence, the highest performing students will never work with someone more able than themselves. In a study conducted by van Steendam et al. (2014), it was concluded that L2 students benefit from peers if those less able are paired with others of different abilities; while those who are more able benefit when collaborating with others of the same level. This presents a challenge as, sometimes, L2 students are reported to provide inaccurate feedback or only surface level feedback as shown in Denman and Al-Mahrooqi's study (2013). Streaming peer feedback could benefit from e-classes and jointly combining ESL classes even at college-wise level. This systemized peer reviewing does not only alleviate teacher's responsibility but also gives real opportunities to monitor each individual text.

7.3.5.2 Peers are 'Sharers'

As the study findings highlight, the role of talk prior to writing was highlighted as significant by the participants in promoting the generation of ideas, see section 5.3.1. Social interactionists argue that talk precedes writing in the natural progress of learning a language (Weissberg, 1994). Thus, use of talk can support performance in writing. As talk is likely to be the more accomplished language skill, its use prior to writing is expected to influence writing positively. For interactionists, talk either implicitly with oneself or explicitly in groups, as demonstrated in the work of Vygotsky or Bereiter and Scardamalia (1986) is able to facilitate the process of writing. As the findings show, students' experience of interaction prior to writing is favourable. Though, in the present study, the level of productivity and quality were not compared when a text was written individually or collaboratively, students reported the supportive function of conversation in terms of ideas. This point highlights the role of oral collaboration on promoting ideas for texts. Talk with peers inside classroom for the purpose of generating ideas have been highlighted in many works such as Fisher's *et al.* (2010) and Mercer's. For instance, Fisher *et al.*

(2010) consider talk differing techniques such as discussion for generation of ideas and writing aloud to give opportunity to say sentences before writing them down. Moreover, Mercer (2013) highlights in his article the significance of the quality of talk occurring inside classroom for the mental development to occur such as problem solving skills and development in speaking ability, but this highly depends on the quality of talk. Similarly, Mercer and Hodgkinson (2008) argue for the need of talk as part of the 'intellectual development' inside schooling. This corroborates a study conducted by Staarman (2003) that shows students' online written work is more when writing in dyads than writing individually. With this, meaningful conversation and talk should be used to study subjects at schools such as science mathematics, and literature. Also, talk about texts after writing the first draft can promote thinking and evaluation of issues such as audience, voice, and message. Thus, talk before writing might support idea generation and the establishment of authorial intention, while talk after the first draft might support the evaluation and revision of text in line with authorial intention.

It is not only the views of interactionists that are central to supporting the role of talk, but also sociocultural views of language development. Scaffolding, which extended from Vygotsky's ZPD by Bruner (1985), was operationalized by Van Lier (1996) into six principles of scaffolding writing: contextual support, continuity, intersubjectivity, flow, contingency, and handover. Through these principles, the structure and design of the writing process flows in ways that oblige students to accomplish texts collaboratively. At the level of intersubjectivity, roles are agreed for each group members collaboratively through exploratory talk. In contingency, the instructor provides individual support. At handover, collaborative editing and revision is constructed. These elements offer a practical framework for positioning talk and writing in the social context of writing together, which is of use for writing in an L2 and for novice writers. This framework, however, is barely adhered to in the typical classroom practice observed for this sample; students were given proportional time to talk about ideas prior to writing for ideas generation. Van Lier's (1996) principle of contingency was applied by teacher 1 by giving immediate feedback on texts in the classroom.

On the role of talk to support writing, many studies were conducted in different contexts. For instance, Staarman's (2003) study investigated the effect of talk prior to writing notes in an online discussion forum. By comparing the notes written after either a group talk or no talk, the study reveals that group talk was more effective and resulted in almost double the amount of written notes, increased ideas, deeper understanding of task, and awareness of techniques on how to accomplish the written task. Similarly, Syh-Jong (2007) integrated both talk and writing to see their effect on each other reporting that collaborative talk added to the knowledge of the students and made writing a clearer process. His participants reported that when involved in oral discussions they were stimulated to think about ideas and defend their position which enlightened understanding of the process of writing; yet group dynamics and interrelations were not focused on which does not clarify in what way talk supports the writing process or writing skills.

With collaborative talk, there is a distinctive recognition of the role of blogs as holding either or both written and oral discussion throughout the writing process. Blogs provide affordances in terms of easily designing writing tasks to be accompanied by ongoing feedback provision, not only restricted to the pre-drafting stage. In fact, if employed for giving feedback throughout the process of writing, it can be somewhat disruptive to text construction, as determined by the writer, because of its delayed nature to listen to/read written feedback whenever it suits. It can also be easily monitored by the teacher to observe who are benefiting from this task by looking at the continually changing texts. Additionally, it paves the way towards practising writing while contributing to the discussion itself.

7.3.4.3 Peers create a community of readers

The findings that presented blogging in section 6.1.3 show that peers responses to blogs were felt to consolidate confidence in each other's' identities as writers. They contributed to boosting some of the learners' confidence in selecting topics, varying styles and engaging with readers when blogging. The students themselves indicated that this was an opportunity for them to be

owners of their texts and to communicate a personal message. Also, learners reported that a considerable amount of peer support is useful. Additionally, in Google Classroom, classroom 2 had an open forum for essays to be read by all students where all students submitted assignments in one place. On this, as has already been explained, one student reported benefiting from reading others' styles and ideas by looking at those whose level is higher than his. This in fact, is not widely practised as no other student reported doing this. Though it is very useful for them to see how each student responded to the same task differently, if this were done more effectively then it could have fed into scaffolding by actively analysing different essays that are written by ESL students within the same context. Certainly, it has been reiteratively seen that having shared ground is important; in a study conducted in Taiwan by Yang and Chang (2011), the group engaged in online discussion and comments and perceived peer collaboration positively in comparison with the control group. In their study, it was shown that academic achievements were also held positively when students shared their views and commented on each other's' essays.

A relevant issue for language learning pedagogy is Englishness: a space to practise language authentically other than the classroom. On this, it is clear that Omani students, overall, need additional social support (Al-Mahrooqi *et al*., 2016; Al-Mahrooqi, 2012; and Al-Toubi, 1998). Important issues emerging from this need are discussions around lacking Englishness – or the opportunity to produce the target language authentically outside the classroom, and community. This is certainly recognised by the main ministries responsible for education. In fact, The Omani Ministry of Education (MOE) revealed recently that it now uses social media and technology generally in teaching (Ministry of Education, 2016). Other similar reports are described earlier in the introductory context section about Oman. The reporting of this issue reveals inadequate integration of technology into classrooms, in particular building online classrooms that are not different from traditional ones. In the current study, engagement in online interaction was shown to be minimal, particularly in Class 2, where it was used only to send materials for exams, not for preparing for sessions. Englishness can be as seen more closely in blogging activities whereby students had that opportunity to send materials, not linked to teaching,

and exponentially expected responses from others. It has been noted that they successfully formed a community of friends who were interested in each other's texts.

Additionally, power relations that are implicitly played out in the text go in tandem with the underlying power dynamic attributed to writing in a second language. It was reported, as seen in section 5.1, that the majority of students showed an understanding of 'writing' in English as a separate sphere from their lives within the wider community at the college or their life outside the college. This separation somewhat distances the relationship between writer's or practitioner's and the learner's reality. As such writing in English is a school-related skill that is understood within an academic context. This poses a challenge, as Al-Badwawi (2011) concludes, relating to a lack of 'Englishness' – i.e., a community of English language users – or Wenger's (1998) "communities of practice" which has been reported by Al-Badwawi's participants as one issue Omani ESL writers are facing. Perhaps one reason for this is that in the current curriculum, emphasis is given to the importance of English language as a future demand at the expense of real usage while learning the skill. There are real usages and purposes to write, that might be utilised in classroom practice, such as writing as a hobby, writing for socializing or writing for expressing needs (such as: writing complaints or requests).

In general, with two exceptions, the students related their texts to academia (section 5.2). Nehad showed a passion for writing in the Arabic and English language alike and wrote enthusiastically using different channels such as a diary, blog, and twitter. Interestingly, this student effectively utilized technology, and so it might be that technology can bridge the gap existing in ESL classrooms so that writing can be experienced in different genres, for different audiences, and so as to create support for others. Then, the key is motivation and authenticity of purposes. Technology can be a motivator when students are provided with the appropriate tools and tasks are mediated effectively by significant others. This implies that much more exposure to informal writing experiences is a prerequisite for students to subsequently improve their writing in more formal genres.

This ‘Englishness’ is particularly important for the two types of practitioners of writing: creative and technical that were described at the beginning of chapter 5. The creative writers demonstrated more ability to be reflective, autonomous, and have a personal voice; the technical writers demonstrated alliance towards technicality while writing through being descriptive, less confident, and less voiced. The first category of writers managed their tasks quickly and easily as they have assumed or formed confident agentic roles whilst writing. Yet, the writers who were less confident and were struggling with their voice were preoccupied with a variety of issues whilst writing, such as organisational and linguistic representation. Both need plenty of engagement in an English writing community in order to experience writing within a social context so as to expose them to more natural contexts for writing and to practise negotiating meaning in this context.

Overall, this section highlights a shift in the role of writer, classroom peers, and teacher on the text. To varying degrees, writers were aware of self and stance when writing different text genres. Such awareness was also seen in the rise of the role of the peer as consolidator not as evaluators or proofreaders. Thus, this made the writer-reader-writer relationship more realistic than the noted ones in the traditional ESL classes. Moreover, teachers influence on the text is strong – as will be seen in the following section showing how the influence of teacher is strongly linked to predisposing the writer to think about grammaticality, lexemes, and the formality of teacher-addressed-texts.

7.4 E-Genre: learning opportunities and challenges

Combining different text genres into teaching how to write presents a valuable asset that is unlikely to be achieved by using only one genre. This concurs with the argument presented by Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998) who strongly advocate varying learners’ experiences of writing different genres. In line with their argument, this section adopts a view of teaching writing through different genres by presenting the affordances and challenges of all three genres that were the focus of this study, i.e. diary text, essay text and blog text, in order to inform the teaching of writing as a foreign language skill.

7.4.1 Formality as teacher-oriented

As indicated in the findings in 5.3, in Omani classrooms formality seems to dominate and the most common genre is the academic essay. The use of formal language is the foremost feature of classroom-based texts. Additionally, the students were aware of such text characteristics which were often described in relation to the following: organisation, quotation and referencing, line of argument, accuracy and fluency. This presented a challenge when the present study required the participants to produce other forms of genres – diary and blog. However, because formality is taught and marked, formal forms of writing were perceived as an obligatory aspect of text. Overall, very little informal writing is seen in the Omani context. This indeed is important; however, it is possible that simply deploying required features might undermine a sense of 'authentic academia'. For instance, Henning and Van Rensburg (2002) argue that the inclusion of quotations signals being an academic and being part of the academic circle of writers. Thus, quoting is part of the identity through which a learner negotiates his position in the wider community. Through such practices a writer is known and his/her work is acknowledged. Hence, ESL writers need to feel that sense of incorporating 'authentic quotation' as a means of gaining a position as writers within a community. However, there is a difference between quoting to support a writer's argument and merely acts of mimicry.

The present study reveals that the students' understanding of the formality of academic text was reported through surface-level features, such as by absence of self-reference (use of self-denoting pronouns), avoiding contractions, writing complete sentences, or using logical connectors. In support to this, when looking at students' academic texts, it was shown that, most of the low performing students tended to use logical connectors excessively and sometimes incoherently in every sentence, with the justification that they wanted to show that they are applying classroom materials in texts. Such behaviours illustrate that there is a difference between 'performing academic' and 'being academic'. Authenticity means adopting a feature for a writerly purpose rather than meeting a perceived requirement. ESL learners should be informed by authorial intention for their linguistic choices. In a study conducted

by Myhill (2005) with secondary aged native users of English, the participants reported that formality was shown through their selectiveness of particular vocabulary terms over others, such as: buy or purchase, shop or store, help or aid. Academically, in each instance of the pair of terms, the second ones are considered more sophisticated than the first ones. As such, it might be concluded that informative use of language lexemes, as shown by Myhill's participants, is part of composing which is challenging for L2 learners, who as depicted in the present study, lag far behind in their linguistic knowledge of English as a second language. As such, it is important to focus on this aspect as much as possible when the chance presents itself or in pre-writing tasks. This makes the drafting stage of writing more purposeful and highly rewarding for student writers. Discussion of linguistic possibilities at this stage might allow for the increased quality of textual choices within the varied language experience of each writer.

Nonetheless, through analysis of logical connectors in the three genres, the current study reveals a high tendency to use logical connectors overall without exceptions. This poses two main challenges. Firstly, as corroborated by Rahman's (2013) study on the use of cohesive devices in Omani descriptive essays in HE, who concluded that there is no indicator of the relationship between level in English and the frequency of cohesive device use; he revealed, however, that Omani students tended to use more lexical cohesion than native writers. In addition to this finding, the present study reveals that even across non-academic texts, students rely excessively on the use of connectors which indicates that it is becoming part of their voice and sense of writing. Secondly, because teachers are the only prompters of writing tasks and activities and because most of the writing in classroom consists of formal texts, students rarely get the chance to practise informal forms of writing. Non-academic writing is not only neglected, but also has no position outside classroom-contexts. This explains the reason why features of academic texts are often transferred to non-academic ones.

7.4.2 Support for meaning making

Importantly, a lack of meaning-making through generating authentic personal ideas was one of the voiced concerns among both the teachers and the students. It has already been established that where teachers focused on teaching the function of each paragraph and a possible argument that goes with it, students often reported that they lack ideas to develop the paragraphs. Indeed, the students showed an inability to refine meaning and some of them tended to write what the teacher discussed in the classroom in an incoherent text using a 'cut and paste' approach without showing any endeavour to add personal messages or understanding. This 'stuffiness' of writing means the meaning remained static through unchanged content from outlining to final drafts in some of the texts. Exacerbating the problem further, the students – in an unsuccessful attempt to conform to academic style – sometimes inserted new expressions in a non-meaningful manner. Clearly the quality and type of feedback, as well as the support given in understanding and responding to feedback, represent key pedagogical concerns which should not be neglected.

The cognitive model of writing (Flower and Hayes, 1981) refers to the role of schemata knowledge in order to write; the need to locate content within a wider framework. This is also demonstrated through the model of writing by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) who explain how a beginner or inexpert writer has to exert conscious efforts in order to perform in comparison with more mature and able writers. Therefore, meaning making is achieved through having to think and compose in L2. The Bereiter and Scardamalia model of development is demonstrated by the writers' increased ability to locate content within a rhetorical framework. Thus, text becomes shaped to a particular purpose rather than the simple chaining of connected ideas. However, the students in the present study suggest that teachers often focus on a framework or argument before students have anything to frame or are aware of any personal argument they might wish to make. This results in them not having the confidence to overcome writer's block, which may well stem from having content but no purpose.

The students themselves were intensively focused on the process of classroom writing, deciphering a variety of demands related to the task, and teacher's instructions. However, they demonstrated low engagement at the pre-writing stage resulting in texts that were poorly rated. Perhaps this is explained in Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) model that expert writers tend to devote more effort towards planning than writing. However, planning can be seen as a continuous process throughout actual writing and is an opportunity for developing and organising ideas (Jones, 2014). All the students in this study without exceptions, even those who were considered by their teachers as high-level performing students, tended to plan once prior to writing and rarely revised the plan as the text was generated. As for the high-level performing students, this is perhaps explained by their broad linguistic repertoire that helped them manage the demanding task of 'translating' thoughts on paper. The question raised by this general pattern of writing behaviour is whether writing in L2 is so cognitively demanding that the two activities of planning and transcribing are necessarily separate activities until thinking in L2.

Bereiter and Scardamalia coined the term 'knowledge transformer' to describe the act of shaping text to a rhetorical purpose which signals development as a writer. In reference to section 5.3.1, the students in this study demonstrated different knowledge transformation behaviours. Some of them only listed ideas as discussed in classroom by their teachers, while others showed more engagement and shaped ideas from their own experiences. Usefully, Bereiter and Scardamalia provide interesting parameters for the process of moving from being a knowledge teller to being a knowledge transformer. They propose that for the knowledge transformer writing involves not only evaluating task requirements – termed as rhetorical problem space – but also depends on prior knowledge about the content – termed as content problem space. As much as these are dependent on the writer, the complexity lies in that the two feed into each other whilst the text is developed. Personal knowledge is thus attuned to respond to the rhetorical problem. However, knowledge telling is a less purposeful activity of simply linking ideas as they occur to the writer. All mature writers do both; either writing to generate ideas or to shape ideas into a

coherent purpose but only more mature writers have the facility to transform the content into a coherent purpose.

However, this model fails to give an account for those who ignore personal knowledge in their writing to conform more to the rhetorical task requirements as 'independently understood'. The writers in the present study tried their best in translating vocabulary, using a variety of connectors, and perhaps sometimes using linguistically correct forms. Yet the content does not have a clear message because the writers did not trust their own knowledge to convey it. These written texts were not as highly rated as those described earlier which are more in accordance with Bereiter and Scardamalia's model. This, it appears, was not properly handled by the teacher who never drew attention to the lack of meaning. Hence, predefined structure is imposed on content rather than shaped by it. As a result, it is not the student's message or voice that is giving rhetorical shape to what is written but internalised expectations of what this kind of writing should look like – the internalised voice of the teacher.

However, it was revealed that through comparing the different ways that writers approach the three texts, their construction of the teacher as the audience runs in tension with the focus on a message or argument for two main reasons. Firstly, students explained the need to impress their teacher by giving priority to what is taught in classroom: organisation and structure. This could be attributed to values that prioritise formality as discussed in the above section. Secondly, the teacher did not give feedback on the ideas or the purpose and meanings of texts. Thus, the messages of these texts are often devalued while form is emphasised. Referring to the process approach, which is adopted in the Omani context, the exemplary work of Coffin *et al.* (2005) emphasises that the writing process should begin by generating ideas and gathering information, which is then developed into a text. Idea generation is precisely the aspect of writing that appeared to be overlooked by teachers in the present sample. Thus, the teachers moved too quickly to text production when they might usefully spend more time supporting students in generating ideas and talking about purpose, meaning and audience.

7.4.3 Vocabulary is part of 'good presentation'

Complexity of vocabulary was signalled as an aspect of good formal presentation of text by the students when interviewed about their process of writing academic texts. Interestingly this complexity was seen as a way of attracting attention of readers in blogs, though most of the students inside the classroom exhibited few strategies to vary vocabulary. As has been previously noted, only one student reported use of a paper dictionary, while most of the students depended on the teacher as a source of translation. Lexical difficulty is not specific to this ESL context, in a study conducted on Tunisian students, Mahfoudhi (1999), reported that lack of vocabulary was seen as a major impediment for writing skills with 42.5% placing lexemes as the top source of difficulty. The issue is that in the current study and in Mahfoudhi's study, the use of lexemes was not changed through drafts. Indeed, the Omani students tended sometimes to cut and paste phrases from their outline to their draft. To complicate the matter, it is only the students who highlighted this as a difficulty; the teachers seemed unaware of this issue and only gave correction on spelling with few suggestions on how to achieve lexical coherence. This would suggest that more focus is needed on this area of difficulty for L2 student writers and that teachers' awareness needs to be raised on this issue.

A very interesting view of vocabulary is seen when incorporating the blog genre into writing. Students have shown an internal drive to grapple with choice of words in order to suit their own readers and present their message effectively. This signals an inherent affordance of blogs in education which has so far rarely been discussed in the literature. Most attention is devoted to the pedagogical uses of blogs in education such as those listed by Conole (2012) as follows: collaboration, communication, reflection, interaction, dialogue, creativity, organisation, inquiry, and authenticity. Those affordances relate more strongly to deliberate teacher-directed uses of blogs, while incidental affordances are less thoroughly explored and reported, especially those relating to informal means of supporting command and ability in written language. The data here suggests that when writing a blog, audience awareness is heightened and this in turn impacts on authentic reasons to evaluate word choice.

7.4.4 Accuracy as important

Moreover, grammatical aspects of writing were highlighted by teachers (in the interviews), students, and corroborated in the observations as an integral part of writing effective academic texts. The need to write accurately was the issue which was most frequently reported by students, who also raised that a teacher's prime correction focus revolves around accuracy. Thus, the transfer of teacher values to student values can be seen. It goes without saying that grammatical accuracy can pose one of the most significant challenges for ESL students and their teachers. Tackling correction of grammatical errors is in fact not even agreed upon in the literature addressing teaching grammar. Myhill (2005: 78) writes: "one persistent conceptualization of how grammar relates to writing centres upon error: the deficit model of grammar teaching." In the current situation, grammar is taught through drilling from grammar books (based on experience as a student and as co-teacher) in a separate course. In a writing course, grammar represents only one aspect of the assessment criteria. For that reason, teachers in both cases of investigation were hardly consistent on teaching/correcting grammar. Additionally, exposure to clear rules of grammar comes suddenly after they have been exposed to language at schools through the Communicative Language Approach (CLA) that gives high priority to teaching language through communication (Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi, 2012). Moreover, grammar teaching and demands for accuracy are two separate issues: when students are taught a grammatical rule, it does not mean they can use those rules to produce meaningful sentences without much practising and drilling. To sum up, there are two issues relating to grammar in ESL context. One is the issue whether and how to teach grammar. Another issue is whether and how to correct grammatical errors to reverse the inaccurate application of the grammatical system. A debate is summed up by the distinction between a prescriptive grammar pedagogy with a focus on how language 'should' be used and a descriptive grammar pedagogy with a focus on how language is used in authentic contexts.

In order to make deliberate improvements to the practice of composition, immersion through analysis of authentic communicative texts can be of use in order that students might explore and experience the functions of grammar in

use, as has been promoted by the systemic function of language theory of Halliday (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2009). Additionally, a focus on grammar by making use of genre pedagogy for the teaching of writing can be beneficial. Hyland (2004:18) contends that genre-based teaching offers "explicit and systematic explanations of the ways language functions in social contexts." This approach would seek to mirror writing that is 'real-not-phony' in English as having a lively and dynamic role, rather than simply deploying linguistic items onto a paper meaninglessly. This links quite clearly to the main question of the present study for when students were given the chance to consider purposeful linguistic choices with a real audience in mind, a significant number of those in the study paid attention to issues of impact and effect in relation to their word level choices, matching their choice to their own purpose and to their knowledge of the reader.

While it is difficult for ESL learners to rely solely on their existing knowledge when they are at a developing stage of their linguistic repertoire; the data here suggest that allowing the students to explore strategies to overcome the barrier of the new language is important. Indeed, SCT provides little guidance to EFL contexts in terms of how to address language aspects. That is because its purpose is to understand the impact of context not evaluate teaching practices. So, it is not surprising that it does not offer direct advice for teaching. Though it was useful – to some extent – to shape and organize collaboration in the classroom, it can also be useful in modelling skills. Acquisition of language is explained much in linguistics and often practised in behaviouristic approaches to teaching. New visions of learning as a social act have largely rejected behaviourism, favouring the idea that language is contextually transferred in line with the ZPD of the learner. From this perspective rather than learning being transferred from teacher to student, it is mediated by the social interaction in the classroom. Also, this theory proposes that learning happens through consciously paying attention to things that are not too challenging and not too easy. In writing, that may include dealing with texts a little beyond their level so that they can progressively improve but with enough that is familiar in order to support new learning. Such learning needs to take place interactively with 'significant' others – such as peers or teachers – which would help consolidate

learning at a stage adjacent to and above their present performance as the interaction between relative novice and relative expert takes place. In this way writers can consolidate their knowledge by peer teaching with other students. This is likely to support both students acting as mentors and students being mentored.

One particular challenge relates to teachers' feedback, where there is a tendency to focus predominantly on grammatical errors (see section 5.3.3). This approach is strongly supported in that "most studies on error correction in L2 writing classes have provided evidence that students who receive error feedback from teachers improve in accuracy over time" (Ferris and Roberts, 2001: 161). However, this correction of grammatical errors also adversely created tension in students' continuous reflection showing fear of marks and grades (see section 4.2.2.2 The Role of teacher). Observation shows that this tension could have been created by deducting grades in the early stages of the writing process, which perhaps contributes to students' continuous foregrounding of accuracy and, sometimes considerable fear of penalization due to grammatical errors. Indeed, this could be a consequence of changing genres such that grammar mistakes are committed due to trying to adopt to a new writer identity or master the linguistic conventions of a different genre rather than an indication of incompetency in grammar itself (Ivanic, 1994). As such, inaccuracy is part of production of texts. Demanding conformity to regulations related to presentation should, when appropriate, be delayed. On this matter, Canagarajah (2013: 131) points out the following:

> "not all textual or linguistic deviation is an error. Many of the presumed errors can be choices made by authors from a range of different options in order to achieve their communicative purposes. For this reason, we must encourage students to orientate to strategies of communication, and deemphasize a strict adherence to rules and conventions".

The fact that students were afraid to make additional errors reduced any changes to subsequent drafts of their texts, when error meant deduction of marks. Interestingly, given that blogs were assessment-free, involvement in such experiences freed the writer from a focus on error. This changed what was

written – especially for these L2 learner in relation to message-oriented texts. The possibility of varying the register of writing rather than immediately putting on the 'strait-jacket' of academic writing may carry benefits for L2 writers in terms of idea development, drafting and crafting the message.

7.4.5 Process is condensed

The findings reveal insufficient and unsuccessful drafting of essay texts. The writing process observed was staged into, outline, first draft, teacher correct, final draft, and finally teacher gives marks. This posed a challenge because the students were not given the opportunity to spend time rewriting their thoughts and sentences by themselves; it would have been useful for them to engage more with ideas, content and form in order to make effective progress with subsequent drafts. This could have been increased by classroom interaction or by use of social media. Hyland's (2002a) model of process writing gives prominence to revisiting the text for either fluency or accuracy purposes in clear stages that each writer can individually practice. Additionally, Coffin *et al.* (2005) presented a model where attention to surface level features and editing is delayed while the generation and organisation of ideas takes priority. This model breaks down aspects of text production into stages that are supposed to be undertaken over a sustained period. Nonetheless, studies show that only when students are helped to assess the quality of their writing for themselves can they make substantive revisions (Beach and Friedrich, 2006). Students need to be judgmental and critical about what their text's purpose is in order to redraft their text. This is also noted by Oliver (2013) who reported that her study's participants avoided critical evaluation of their texts and tended to engage in 'lower-level' value judgment in the form of checking.

The practice of correcting students' first draft presents another challenge as to the possible effective role of the teacher in responding to poorly formed texts in order to support students in the classroom in a timely and effective manner. Likewise, this is no more offered through differing approaches to teaching writing as EAP in ESL contexts. To be specific, the process approach is based on the assumption that learners are able to do their own recycling and refining of texts. In practice, some beginner L2 learners are barely able to compose

texts to the basic requirements. Overall, it can be said that process writing can be elevated through providing chances for engagement with others as was seen when writing blogs. Providing a clear purpose for this interaction might add value to this experience, so providing prompt questions for peer reviewers of texts such as ‘what were you trying to say’ or ‘have you said it effectively’ or ‘has your reader understood your message’ might catalyse fruitful talk opportunities that link writing choices to the effect on their audience.

Records that reported students’ beliefs and perceptions about their writing practices present some insights, but require additional investigation and corroboration. For instance, in a recent study conducted by Ginosyan and Tuzlukava in Oman on the last semester Foundation Year Program (FYP), on the one hand, the majority of the participants reported their ability to write a first and second draft successfully (Ginosyan and Tuzlukava, 2016). On the other hand, they reported difficulty in major important skills such as: synthesising, paraphrasing, interpreting tabulate data, and referencing skills. Ginosyan and Tuzlukava’s study was limited by surveying merely students’ perceptions about their abilities, which is not enough to know whether they successfully engaged in the drafting process. The situation is complicated; for example, when the present study investigated students’ actual process of writing, the data revealed that students do not make clear outlines, neither do they make changes in subsequent drafts. It is not known for sure whether students actually make any progress in line with what is proposed by approaches of teaching writing. What may well be the case, however, is that the two processes of planning and revision are linked recursively rather than taking place in a linear way. So, revision might lead to new planning just as revision might be assessed against initial planning intentions. In this way, an ill-formed plan might not support revision just as effective revision might reveal an ill-formed plan. That the students in this study do not engage in either activity might be a consequence of a pedagogic attention to the final product rather than the process by which it was constructed. Blogging may be one means by which the process is given a stronger emphasis.

7.4.6 Contextualising and scaffolded drafting

Techniques related to scaffolding different drafts can be of importance to support effective redrafting of texts; in response to the observed and reported failure of drafting in the findings chapter as can be seen in 5.3. This matter is largely overlooked in studies and literature related to teaching of writing. In the present study, it was revealed that blogging created a socially enabling setting for writing, creating a community of readers and writers. Considering the six principles of scaffolding generated by Van Lier (1996) the sample were provided with contextual support which includes providing a rationale, goal, and technological support. In order to support learners contextually, class 1 received regular teacher step-by-step guidance showing students how to use, send and engage with materials through Google-Classroom, then students became familiar with the general framework in which writing is to occur. This is a typical example of setting up virtual writing classrooms.

However, there is a challenge with regard to the possible role of providing support whilst drafting. Such lack of support implies that students are assumed to automatically know the way to reconstruct their texts, which may be more typical of an experienced writer. In response to this, the rationale of process writing is explained as: “process writing in the classroom may be construed as a programme of instruction which provides students with a series of planned learning experiences to help them understand the nature of writing at every point” (Seow, 2002: 316). Seow also warns against another concern with the practice of teaching process in classrooms which relates to teaching it in stages or in sequence, whereas the impetus of process writing is its co-occurrence and messiness. In line with this, Jones (2013: 53) explains that the process of putting words on paper is not only complicated but also shapes the final text; as she writes: “our ideas are shaped by the sentences that hold them, and so their purpose, meaning and impact can appear to emerge from the process of writing itself – a meaning that did not exist in such a crystallised form until it was shaped by the written text”. Keeping this in mind, it is crucial that the writing process is not oversimplified by staging it but that it is taken by showing the student how final texts are constructed through guidance and meaningful reconstruction in different drafts.

Interestingly the data show that differing forms of genres influences the process of writing; an issue that is rarely discussed in the literature which only addresses how writing is approached theoretically. Yet this study shows that different genres influenced the way ESL writers tend to focus on analysis of the context and its demands and so impact on the way writing occurs. So, if given timed tasks for academic essays, students write in the given time, for some even without an outline. If offered the delayed spontaneous approach, students were more likely to incorporate discussions with friends for data gathering, taking time for translation (and asking their teacher/ or googling), which means they invest time in an outline. When working within the writing blog genre, they only wrote immediately and spontaneously on the basis of their readers' response (who tended to be their friends) and the message they wished to convey.

This shows that the demands of each genre type (spontaneity, different message, and different readers) do not always require the same process of writing in practice. Blogs are often informal and handled similarly to unplanned speech. This also affected the topics and contents which in blogs ranged from personal stories and personal life records to personal habits and personal observations. These topics are often entirely improvised and associated with daily life. This can also mean that views of teaching writing as a social act must be parallel to the needs of writers and the context in which they are writing: the process should afford opportunities for authentic learning experiences. Additionally, works that addressed the cognitive aspects of writing (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987; Flower and Hayes, 1980 and 1981) addressed writing as resolving the cognitive demands of the writing task. For this reason, the final outcome that is prescribed within any institution is addressed individually at each stage of the writing process. Differences between novices or children and expert writers are frequently referred to, implying that a novice writers' communicative skills development in writing is a matter of recursive refinement of texts, derived from external influences on the writer. This approach, with its emphasis on the individual writer can lead to a failure to connect personal cognition (thinking/ perception) to a conscious interaction with external societal variables of relevance to the written work both socially and linguistically.

This dilemma of the unclear understanding and application of process writing within ESL writers gives rise to often neglected views of writing that relate to the space outside the classroom, in both views of cognitive and sociocultural theories. From cognitive models of writing, informal writing goes through stages. In sociocultural models, it is a matter of bringing cultural knowledge (to who, why, what, where, how) and 'writing' collaboratively to incorporate this accordingly. Notwithstanding, it is the link that schooling for writing makes on how writing is carried out which is important to note: informal writing – because writing is on most occasions introduced formally – incorporates some of formal features in texts. This arguably strengthens my claim regarding the need for a community of readers and writers brought together in a social context, for instance through the use of blogs. Such a community can benefit from teachers who can communicate informally with their students and thus present an exemplary for informal written communications. Through this community, it is easier to integrate discussions about genres that are usually informal in their nature such as diary.

7.4.7 Voice or coded written discussion

A significant issue in the construction of a text as an extension of self is demonstrated through voice, which can be defined as "projecting of the writer's identity and construction of their role as a writer within their text" (Matsuda and Jeffery, 2012: 151). In this sense, writers are seen in the text though inclusion of particular terms, style or tone. Ivanic and Camps (2001) also point out that voice positions the writer within a social and a historical frame through the use of different voices such as: "environmentally aware voice, a progressive-educator voice, a sexist voice, a positivist voice, a self-assured voice, a deferential voice, a committed-to-plain-English voice, or a combination of an infinite number of such voices" (Ivanic and Camps, 2001:3). As such, voice could be intentionally chosen. Bakhtin (1986) envisions language as carrying multi-voicedness in a way that everyone has his/her own voice and anyone can adopt a voice purposefully, as discussed in the literature review.

It was seen that voice was central to students' writing as emanating from the writers' choice of particular linguistic elements to fulfil specific aims in many ways. For instance, a key finding in this study was that students particularly enjoyed having their own coded talk while blogging through different techniques such as mixing both languages – Arabic and English, transliteration and using culturally known terms that are tailored to their friends (see section 6.1.3). In doing so, a global reader may become confused. This is in part similar to online chatting, yet with the advantage that any outsider can join the written talk and have the possibility of asking for clarification. This playfulness with the English language as encoded with personal and social meaning showing understanding and use of English in practice which is appropriate for the particular context – the blog genre. On the other hand, classroom texts were seen as owned by teachers and, perhaps carrying the teacher's voice, in Bakhtin's views. The only difference is they could wear the 'teacher's voice' differently according to difference in academic levels and schemata. For this reason, practice inside the classroom does assume that students will use the language as intended; students were aware enough to discover the academic voice, or 'teacher voice', but blended this for their own purposes. Nonetheless, Bakhtin recognizes multi-voicedness as a sign of a complex texts. As such, playing with voices to get the message across represents one of the important aspects of complex literacies.

In part, a unified academic voice in formal classroom texts was obvious, with little personal engagement seen. Voicedness, however, was particularly noted in the most discursive academic essays (which were graded A: 90-100). The more academically able students showed more ability to present arguments and defend their own ideas by counter-arguments and presenting a stance clearly. This distinguished them from others who kept their teachers' ideas and simply pasted them into their own texts. Students with more average performance were more selectively adopting friends' ideas, or resorting to different resources such as references and online resources.

Rise of voice in text is explained by Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996) as:

> "Part of the problem arises from the fact that audience and voice are largely culturally constrained notions, relatively inaccessible to students

> who are not full participants in the culture within which they are asked to write. More significantly, however, the problem stems from an inductive approach to teaching writing, an approach that encourages students to discover form in the process of writing" (Ramanathan and Kaplan, 1996: 22).

Ramanathan and Kaplan are concerned with the issue of transferability and the ability to form values and perceptions about readers. Additionally, the concept of voice is not easily accessible across cultures for L2 writers. Because of that, voice requires an understanding of and engagement with who a text is addressing. Both issues of audience and voice became more transparent when students reflected about blogging. This indeed does lead to the inference that audience is considered as essential when adapting to different genre yet thinking about audience does not always clearly affect the text with the same strength. Perhaps this can be attributed to the properties of blogs that made the audience seem more interactive.

Furthermore, voice in diary was buried perhaps because it is not clear what is expected, being descriptive – extrospective (from inside to outside), and introspective (referring to inner). Some students were clearly reporting their lives as if talking about facts in descriptive statements in a manner suggesting that their talk was about someone else. Some tended to adopt a voice that was dialogic (with someone who is listening/reading) for example explicitly asking: 'what do you think', or 'it is strange I know', or 'are you surprised!' This reveals that voice is not necessarily clear in all forms of writing. Hence, their current understanding of diary failed to offer an opportunity to practise voice, which perhaps strengthens the argument that ability to show voicedness is something an expert writer is good with, and something that needs teacher support. To argue for this, Bowden (1995) compares voicedness to 'wearing a dress' to suit occasions. The ability to choose and modify a voice makes it something that a writer is consciously able to select. This means that a writer is critically aware of what he/she wants to convey. In a similar analogy, students can be said to have worn 'bad dresses' while less successfully expressing their voice.

Overall, there is a need to reform teaching process writing in ESL contexts to be more responsive to students' abilities in order to effectively be able to respond to the rhetorical demands of the writing task. Teaching of process writing can benefit from differing genres to show that each form of writing can be handled differently. Thus, students should be provided with opportunities to write both formally and informally and to a wider range of readers.

7.5 A reformed and informed process approach

All points mentioned earlier in this chapter point to the need for an applied understanding of and guidelines for the teaching of writing for an L2 novice writer, in line with a 'post-process' approach to the teaching of writing. This approach shifted attention from the influence of cognition to the 'social turn' on composition in a matter that it is about meaning making and communication as a social act and the purpose of writing (Matusda, 2003). Hence, it extends concepts of process writing as contextually carried out. This leads to a central question for the teaching of writing: what lies beyond thinking simply about linguistic accuracy and fluency that might be included in professional practice for teaching 'real writing'? This concerns an important issue that is usually neglected in discussions of teaching writing concerning the 'authentic process of writing'; that is, personalised writing experiences that include an understanding of the construction of text which is as close to that happening in a real L1 context and accounting for the cultural differences.

On the same side of the argument, Myhill (2005: 85) identifies the following:

> "…developing metalinguistic awareness about linguistic choices made in the design of a piece of writing, at lexical, syntactic and textual levels, as having a potential role within a socio-cultural view of writing as social practice. At the heart of such a theoretical perspective is the importance of making connections between grammar and meaning."

In order to achieve this, a writer first needs to have authorial intention – a meaning to express or a purpose to share as a means of assessing the effectiveness of linguistic choices. The strategies at the heart of this study have placed a similar focus on discerning meaning, voice and message. As such, discussion with the teacher facilitates understanding of linguistic usage in

communication particularly for a delayed production of texts when done individually.

An important issue emerging from the data reveals the need for an approach that focuses on three dimensions: language knowledge, a cognitive representation of writing as a process and the social context. All three dimensions are not reflected in one particular approach to the teaching of writing as each one focuses on different aspects of development. To forge a link between sociocultural theory, cognitive theory and linguistic theory of teaching, the process approach (being more a replicate of how mentally the process of writing is seen) should be revisited from thoughts and practices fostered closely with the sociocultural theory of teaching as in the genre-based approaches. During this, care should be taken to provide students with proper linguistic basics, ensuring also that this teaching is in the context of the production of the text – in other words it becomes contextually situated. In the following chapter a detailed process approach is presented.

7.6 Audiencing Strategies and Types in three Genres

Here, addressing the key question of the present study seems highly important in order to present a clear and direct answer to the main enquiry of the current study: *how ESL low-level writers understand 'audience' while writing in different text types in the Omani Higher Education Context*. Each sub-question that is asked at the end of the Literature Review Chapter is answered individually.

1- How do ESL low-level writers see themselves as writers?

The ESL low-level writers showed two patterns of writing style: either writing reflectively or descriptively. For those who write in a reflective manner, they were able to use their own ideas and to involve their personal knowledge in response to rhetorical demands of the task. However, those who write in a descriptive manner tended to rely on differing sources of information such as classroom materials, talk with teacher or peers, or online search. Consequently, they seemed to have thoughts that were 'cut and pasted'.

2- *What are the major differences and similarities between writing in different genres (i.e. diary, academic essay and blog) in terms of process and product?*

For academic texts, either the participants did not do any pre-draft at all or they only wrote ideas given by teacher or peer in a Venn diagram. As for the draft stage, the academic essay was only composed by writing one draft. In terms of product of academic essay, quality was judged on the use of range of vocabulary and accurate language use. As for diary, the process included writing on reflection at a time; while the product of the entries ranged from one concise sentence to long and elaborative paragraphs. As for the process of writing blogs, there were two types of writing blog entries: either akin to essay organisation or structured creatively – for variety of structure refer to Chapter 6. A recurrent comment about the three types of genre is that they were written with practising writing in English language in mind.

3- *1 Who did the students think their audience is/are?*

When writing the three genres, the audience was mainly created mentally. Regarding the academic text, the perception of audience came from the students' direct interaction with their teacher inside classroom. Hence, understanding of the audience of the academic essay was purely restricted to the teacher who taught the writing course. Regarding audience of diary genre, it was the most hybrid type of audience ranging from the writer himself, the teacher or the researcher, to the public. Regarding audience of blog genre, it was described as any authentic reader who was interested to read texts. Hence, audience was seen as both a friend and a stranger, both a commenter and a sharer, both known and unknown.

3- *2 How did the students shape their text to suit the intended audience?*

The students showed that they were strategic in addressing the written text to particular audience. For instance, when composing academic essays, the participants referred to trying to 'impress' their teacher by focusing on what they perceived as teacher's evaluation of a good text. This was focused on

language, i.e. accuracy vocabulary variety, and technicality of text, i.e. organisation. Likewise, differing strategies were used when writing blogs such as: introducing cultural topics, unusual issues, issues that are relevant to their generation, inviting readers to comment or to take an action, asking for clarifications, or offering help.

4- *What factors influenced decisions related to audience?*

There were influencing factors that led to the particular understanding of audience. These factors are formed of context-specific perceptions developed by the writers. One factor is teaching instructions received which included: rhetorical demands of the tasks. Another one is the role of the teacher – whether a judge of the quality of text or a supporter for text development. Additionally, limited exposure to a variety of genres led to limiting student understandings of real audiences that can be accessed through technology.

5- *How did the students understand the nature of the text type in relation to audience?*

Audience type was reported to be part of the understanding of each genre investigated in the present study. On the one hand, academic texts were associated with an academic audience, i.e. particularly the teacher, and thus conformed with particular linguistic, rhetorical, and technical demands that were taught in the classroom. On the other hand, both diary and blog texts were associated with a non-academic audience. Thus texts were written with use of informal conventions by use of contractions, everyday language and jargon, jokes, stories, a mixture of Arabic and English expressions and emoji. However, a heightened sense of thinking about audience was experienced when writing blogs.

6- How can technology support the writing experience of low-level ESL writers?

Technology can support Omani ESL students writing positively in many ways. The present study reports hurdles associated with use of technology in the Omani context; however, it also highlights the positive influence of technology

on writing. There are many ways to support writing by employing technology such as: extending submission of tasks, send urgent notifications, requests and reminders, synchronous and asynchronous discussions (as seen in blogs), extending 'real' audience to classroom, and online exchange of ideas. Overall, a favourable perception was associated with use of technology to extend the typical offline classroom.

7.7Conclusion

I believe that creating collaborative communities for writing is needed in ESL context; however, the problem lies with the need for support of and integration between linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural theories. The three kinds of theories provide solid knowledge about writing yet need to be practically considered in relation with teaching writing in ESL contexts. This is particularly an issue because important concepts of writing such as 'audience' tend to be 'created' or made as they do not naturally exist. Thus, a pertinent issue is the negotiation of the writer's position on text.

Analysis of pedagogy and writing practice alludes to the need for the revisiting of teaching practices. It has also shown that students demonstrated their teachers' academic voice, not theirs, in their academic essays. Beyond the classroom context, different blogs affordances – that are unique from usual classroom texts – presented a clearer sense of 'audience', thus obliging L2 writers to respond by focusing on what they want to say: the message and their personal engagement with text. The discussion has given strong grounds to mix more than one text type and so varying the writing experiences of students. It also argues that sociocultural views of writing have the potential to strongly alter classroom dynamics with the assistance of technological affordances.

A learners' awareness of their own identity as a writer of an individual text is a central tenet of the current discussion as part to text construction. It became evident from the data that writer identity is a key factor to consider when studying 'text' production and the compositional development of learners. Thus, I believe that pedagogical decisions in the classroom should mirror and be

responsive to an L2 writers' formation of identity. Part of development is to discern what is appropriate for the writer to say in response to 'this audience' depending on the task.

Finally, the discussion shows a strong direction towards the need for combining technology in teaching that allows for the creation of an audience as real and authentic. It also argues for a mixture of tasks for practising writing, combining both formal and informal 'discourses'. Additionally, it foregrounds the importance of focusing on the development of the Omani learners as writers of English with their own individual voices. For this, criticality of oneself and one's own writing is at the heart of not only progressing but knowing one's current level of writing, and so determining the direction as well as prompting the growth of a writer. There should be a call for clearer pedagogical practices using a more diverse range of tasks and locating development in writer identity as well as texts. Little progress has been made in the L2 field with particular reference to the demographical, ideological, and social aspects of writing. This field needs its own autonomy in the applied social science of teaching writing; as its foundation should be based on the premise of developing humans as active performers thereby enabling them to actively merge with their future societies as practitioners, researchers, or teachers.

Chapter 8:
Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Problem of writing in the Omani context

In relation to my original research questions, this study has revealed that ESL writing in Oman tends to be formalized within the institution and through teachers' specific demands. In this, marking criteria and students' individual interpretation play a key role. Hence, writing is associated with particular meanings and values added to theories and practices. In this, the teaching of writing is socially constructed (Rijlaarsdam, 1992) and constrained by the needs, demands, and expectations of any social context (Graham and Rijlaarsdam, 2016).

However, the social construction of writing education should not be viewed as the imposition of inevitable socialising tendencies, but that awareness of the social context might inform agentic decisions and should not be a barrier to an authentic writing process. The study does not only reveal that exposure to writing texts is overly narrow and not fully relevant within a wider social context, but it also shows writing in English is completed in a 'robotic' manner to comply with perceived teachers' demands. Despite many studies urging for a continuous/interacting context outside teacher-student relationship (such as Al-Badwawi, 2011 and Wenger, 1998) – in an original and authentic manner – in which meanings are constructed around the process of writing and a range of genres in English, this ambition seems to be far from reality. Nonetheless, prospects of such writing experiences can be seen as positive in the current context, where Omani MoHE strives to provide connectivity to its institutes which provide infrastructure to vary learners' virtual online experiences with writing in English.

Issues relating to unhelpful and perhaps overly didactic practices are shown in the current study through inadequate outlining or completing only one draft, which does not sufficiently support or provide the necessary time and space for the generation of ideas nor the shaping of a rhetorical purpose. In response to

societal and assessment driven demands, students rush to think about the presentation of text rather than their own voice and message, leading to plentiful ‘copying’ and ‘pasting’. This explained the students’ ability to respond to the demands of organisation, use of transitions, writing functional sentences and vocabulary. This partial grasp of the writing process has serious implications for teaching writing of ESL in Oman HE. Nonetheless, students can pass criteria for assessment even with such a limited sense of overall purpose by simply deploying the features that have been taught. This perhaps raises further questions about assessment criteria and how well they represent writing quality.

8.2 Pedagogical Implications

Giving an opportunity to practise three genres, i.e. diary, blog and academic essay, together simultaneously and by the same writers highlights the importance of teaching each individual genre for differing purposes. For instance, writing an academic essay is a requisite for those students, yet introduced too soon before the students are able to handle the underlying skills within this type of writing. Issues such as buried ideas, writer block and linguistic barriers showed prominence which require direct attention. However, both diary and blogs were effective in freeing the writer from over-thinking about grammaticality, and in paving the way to be as writers. This is an experience rarely permitted for those students. So in relation to teaching genre, the following is suggested.

One pedagogical approach involves teaching academic essay writing skills with a focus on issues such as varying time and criteria of grades, practising recursive-ness of drafting, and allowing time for class talk. Regarding varying time and criteria of grades, in the current situation grades are allocated only on the final draft which shifted attention on how the final draft is presented rather than on how final draft is ‘made’. It is suggested that different kinds of evaluations are utilized at different points in the process writing rather than evaluating only the final version. Because students are taught to write through process writing, each stage of process writing (i.e., planning, first drafting, final

draft) can be evaluated for completion with certain outcomes. And so this shifts the drafting process from a linear one to that which is recursive, the second part asserted for. For instance, at the planning stage, key ideas, useful content, structuring the ideas and key message can be evaluated. At the first draft stage, evaluation is essential on ideas, coherence, and whether the planning intentions have been met especially regarding key message. At the final draft stage, evaluation can occur on proofreading and correcting surface errors.

Regarding allocation for class talk, studies have suggested that quality of class talk impacts significantly the learning experience of the participants (Mercer, 2013). Therefore, an elemental pedagogy of teaching ESL writing should involve practices of allowing times for dialogue around written texts. This should be guided and closely observed in order to guarantee the foremost possible outcome in alliance with expected course outcomes. Critical to this, an ESL student should be warned against using intellectual property of others. Clear discrimination should be made between texts written collaboratively and individually. Perhaps developing collective efforts for interpreting the rhetorical demands of the task and designing a plan for text production is more effective than simply pooling together ideas.

A pedagogy that is central to text construction is developing a sense of criticality of ones' and others' texts. The present study shows that some students can benefit from comparing what they have written with other texts written within the same rhetorical demands and under the same classroom instructions. Additionally, it is suggested to encourage reading texts written by a wider writerly community, as shown when writing and reading blogs. Therefore "the students receive a great deal of exposure to English texts written by native speakers which they can critically and analytically comprehend" (Rahman, 2013: 8). In line with this, Krashen talks about exposure as essential prior to production in his Input Hypothesis (1989). Then authenticity of writing process should involve knowing how a text fits within a wider range of texts and only then is the writer able to negotiate his/her written texts. Through exposure and noticing other texts, the writers can develop a sense of text reality that departs from what students are usually exposed to through schooling. In addition, to

comprehend what it means to negotiate one's own meaning – or to be voiced – the students need to see how 'mature' writers negotiate their own meanings through creating their text: either academic or in a non-academic environment. Perhaps this reaches to the core of models of the writing process, such as Bereiter and Scardamalia's who emphasise knowledge shaping as a key skill in moving from novice to expert. Hence, drawing on the experiences of those who are already able to write is no longer about those who attain higher marks within the same classroom, but more about bringing 'authentically able writers' to classrooms through the use of social media such as blogs. The blog environment is especially helpful in integrating reading and writing into the same process. Thus, not only do writers draw on expert texts as a model for writing but they are also continuously placed in the role of both the reader and writer of texts which informs their sense of audience.

Moreover, meaning making is not only at the core of writing process but also an area of struggle for the ESL writers in the Omani context. Hence, it is stressed that the students practice and are given ample time on the level of meaning making. Myhill (2005:85) for instance asserts that "[d]eveloping metalinguistic awareness about linguistic choices made in the design of a piece of writing, at lexical, syntactic and textual levels, has a potential role within a socio-cultural view of writing as social practice." Within this view, students will not be enabled to interact with the outer community unless they are enabled at the level of conveying meaning with ample linguistic tools. In this way, they will be enabled to develop their conscious and purposeful use of particular expressions, terms, or linguistic forms. With this in mind, the role played by grammar in the ESL context has to be evaluated: though it is certainly an important aspect of developing the L2 writers' skills; nonetheless, as argued by scholars (such as Ramirez, 1995; Myhill, 2005), it has to be taught and developed within a context. Usefully, this provides a departure from the traditional prescriptions of grammar teaching, which consider grammar as a standing entity of language to be mastered by active rehearsal and conscious repetition. Indeed, there should be a call for a pedagogy of writing that is mindful of the multitasking of a range of skills that are necessary for text construction. The role of grammar as one of these multiple skills for writing should involve

deliberate pedagogic attention to the process of meaning negotiation and the selection of grammatical structures for their functions in shaping intended meaning.

Although the context of my study is in HE and graduates are particularly required to excel in academic writing; teaching should not be restricted to simply practising academic writing. If a teacher's concern is to elevate the quality of the written academic text and thus focus on a plethora of complex issues, this can exert undue pressure on the learner mentally, and socially. When the teacher teaches and corrects multiple issues simultaneously, the students are lost in the process of making sense of their experience of writing and end up, as in the case of the present study, confusing teachers' values with what can or should constitute their own voice. The role of other genres therefore can play a part in separating out different skills as the focus of pedagogic attention and this is especially so in developing a sense of audience and developing a personal voice.

A useful pedagogical approach involves presenting a range of 'audiences' as an integral part to practising any form of writing texts, even when writing the academic essays. Academic essays can be written for a range of academic readers, other than the teacher of the course, who could be reachable online such as students in other places. It is important that the teacher not only varies the audience implied in understanding text types, but also specifically guides on varying style to meet an intended function. A useful pedagogical technique is collaborative efforts in groups of students on planning and composing written texts for particular functional and social ends.

Central to understanding the particularity of each genre, the present study asserts the need to allow ample time to practice writing genre type more often than is currently practised. This can involve short and regular logs of diary or blogs written during or exterior to class time. Another technique is avoiding reading students' personal diaries to develop a sense of privacy when writing this type of genre. However, if a need is presented to use an entry, the students

should be given a chance to revise and delete private contents before disclosing the text to a teacher.

8.3 Theoretical Implications

All of the aforementioned issues suggest the need to ensure teaching is responsive to challenges occurring in ESL contexts, such as: the effective implementation of a process writing approach, which highlights the need to facilitate the translating or transforming of ideas in the head into written constructs (from cognitive theories), the value of collaboration, and peer or teacher guidance (from socio-cultural theories) alongside the need for contextualising what is taught by making writing purposeful and relevant.

The data presented here resonates with Feez's (1998) Cycle of Teaching and Learning model which deploys guidance and collaboration as part of learning to write in collaborative efforts. Learning to write can be staged into three main stages: deconstructing (through modelling and analysis), construction (through joint and individual writing), and then reconstructing. Practically, this model facilitates the early stages of writing within a community of collaboration in order to ensure understanding about texts. The later stage of reconstruction is left to the writers themselves whilst writing. Thus it is a model that moves from the support offered by collaboration to the hand over to independence. Additionally, this model is practical because it offers sound guidance as to how to contextualise the more common intention of learning to write with the additional focus on writing to learn which is concerned with discovery and rediscovery of own style, voice, and ideas.

To stress the importance of process writing in line with contextualisation, process writing offers essential specifications in terms of features that are not seen practised in the sample of the present study such as recursive-ness regarding the process of planning and revising. This continuous re-evaluating and support of emergent ideas to reform text helps young ESL writers as their writing style and voice has not yet formed, and so requires discovery or rediscovery.

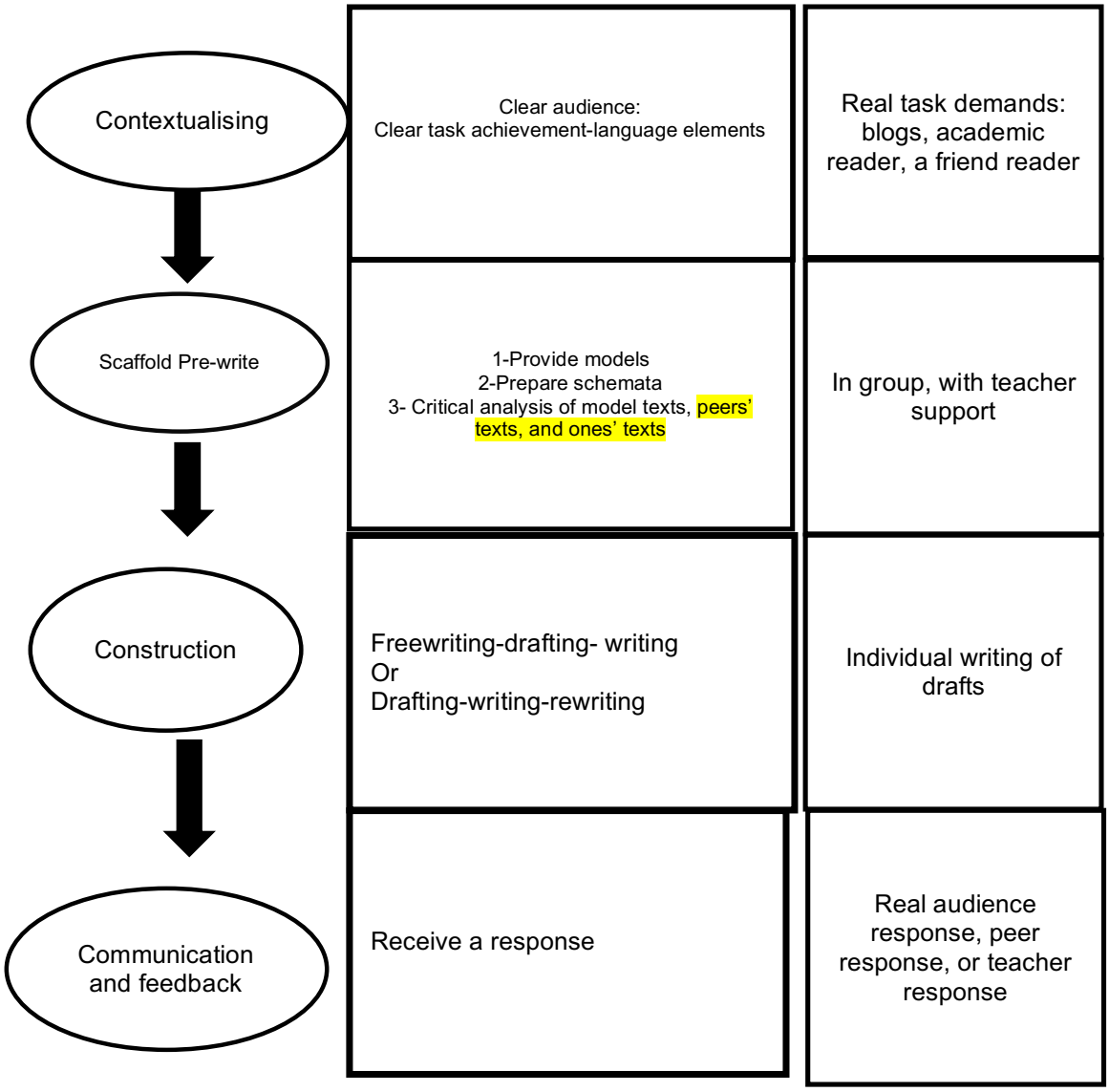


Figure 6.1: Revised model for writing collaboratively

The role of technology as a mediating tool stands in this model to provide context for writing experiences, as seen in Figure 6.1. The importance of this lies in situating technology as a platform to extend opportunities for classroom communications, collaborative tasks and addressivity. Hence, the role of technology for writing extends the roles of students as writers, students as readers of other writers, and the teacher as the manager of the writing process. Also, blogs offer the emerging affordance of its thematic/topical organisation, referring back to Chapter 5. Due to this, the focus is placed on ideas. If blogs are widely used in this way from a pedagogical perspective, the role of the

teacher is then to take their students to their ZPD and gradually begin to address more academic topics which move away from students' ZPD and are progressively more complex linguistically.

8.4 Caveats and limitation of the study

The data of the present study is dependent on participants' ability to voice their own beliefs and ideas about writing but the classroom culture does not allow for many opportunities to express such views and so the data might be limited by student ability to express their own views. Whilst allowing students to talk about their writing can be seen as a chance for practising reflection, this can also be seen as a weakness in relation to the participants' inability to genuinely and deeply identify issues around them.

Collecting different genre texts was staged into three main stages in order to alleviate the burden of excessive writing demands. It was interesting to note the differences between engagement with the genre texts from the learners' experiences. However, the staged approach resulted in writing for a relatively short period of time in blogs– in comparison with other texts which were practised previously – with the implication that the shorter period of time engaged in blogging may have limited their experience. Additionally, because the diary was introduced and taught previously, feelings about it as an academic form of writing impacted on engagement with this genre with the result that, I believe, students had the feeling that they were not wholly writing for personal purposes. As such, it was hard to detach their previous experiences of diary writing and see it as informal writing as was intended by the present study. In light of these issues, if this study was done differently, more scaffolding would be given in order to establish the informality of diary writing, and a longer amount of time would be spent on initiating writing diary texts and on writing blog texts.

Moreover, sending online reminders on Google classrooms to the students to remind them to submit their written texts (diary and blog entries) may have constantly reminded the writers of the role of the researcher as a possible audience of their texts. This in sense disrupted the on-going established sense

of a genre as being directed to its assumed particular audience, i.e. diary for oneself, academic essay for academic reader and blog for public readers. This could have been felt strongly when writing diary particularly because of the already established association in the past for the participants that diaries are read by teachers.

8.5 Recommendation for future research

Integrating technology in Omani higher education and assessing its role in classroom dynamics remains a priority in promoting learning experiences. The present and previous studies have shown that technology is being invested in and efforts are made to utilise its affordances. Yet, the most effective use of affordances needs to be explored to yield practical teaching guidance that is culturally appropriate. In line with this important issue, tracking the professional development of an L2 writer through a longitudinal study would shed more light on the impact of technological interventions. Another issue may be to compare the quality of texts with and without talk. Findings from the current study indicate that talk has a possible positive effect in terms of mutual support within a community working collaboratively; however, it is not clear whether this enhances the quality of texts. It may be, for example, that talk and collaboration help in generating ideas and finding an individual voice, but is less helpful in converting these ideas into written forms which have different linguistic characteristics to speech. This might be especially problematic for the L2 writer. A study that looked at how different kinds of talk activity support writing might help to corroborate how justified attitudes of favouring teacher over peer support may be.

Another suggested study is exploring the possible impact of scaffolding strategies that the teachers can provide for low or weak writers of English as a foreign skill. This does not only expand on the effective strategies of scaffolding in writing as a foreign skill, but also attracts the attention to a serious problem of whether or not some students make progress in terms of their performance. Such a study would involve the identification of some of the challenges faced by struggling writers into order to consider how the affordances of technology

or the use of different genres might best meet these particular needs. In addition, it can reveal factors contributing to writing skills promotion.

8. 6 Professional Impact

Writing extensively about students brought me closer to what I have always yearned for: to be a teacher. I always remember that the time I first liked English as a school subject was because of my math teacher. I had always excelled in the two subjects, imagined having conversations, wanting to be 'flattered', and spent hours at home on studying and researching. Prior to this, I had never been aware of having any talent. Only then did I find things I liked. Only then did I decide to be a teacher. All those memories were lost when my career started. I became detached from my students' circle of learning, perhaps similar to those teachers of subjects that I did not like.

Now I know one important thing: teaching writing at higher education is never lecturing. It is taking students to the threshold of apprenticeship. If we are to teach children speech by speaking with them; or teach them to read by reading with them, then it seems counterintuitive that we teach them writing by punishing them – through marks that are more indicative of what they cannot do, than of what they can do, just as my study participants strongly associated their lack of grammar with the deduction of marks.

As a writer, I have always been marked as an able student at college, perhaps due to my interest in grammar. Only when I pursued my Master and PhD outside my country did I note that I had lost the sound inside me; I had nothing to say. Perhaps no one, including myself, knew that was missing – there was no set criterion indicating the importance of 'identity,' or 'voice'. Hence, I admit that there are certain levels of attainment that I am not sure of. What then could happen when I came face-to-face with my own writerly 'identity' when I knew for sure that in every passage I write, or every study I read, there are thoughts and ideas to express or to interpret. I have now learned from the encounter with my own students, but have continued this learning as a researcher, and with my participants' experiences, processes, ideas, connectors, grammar, and above all their voice. So will I view writing differently? I undoubtedly will. After

being inside students' perspectives and experiences, I understand that they are individual writers with their own voice. Textbooks are not always explicit about underlying theories or ontologies. Textbooks tend to be unidimensional; by setting tasks that are alienated from ideologies and personal experiences that are not usually transferable to teachers and cannot always fit every set of class. However, I now know that in the past I have given little space to students to work on their own writing. In fact, I may have unknowingly perpetuated their desire to cast me as the 'judge of texts'.

Being a researcher as part of my trajectory as a teacher is perhaps the most transformational aspect of my PhD route. Simply, this is because it allowed space and time for reflection, asking, and talking with 'little writers' or 'developing' those who were previously only viewed as 'students'.

8.7 Concluding Remarks

Teaching of writing as a second language skill does not come as naturally as writing in a first language. And usually it is institutionalised within a larger language learning culture and agenda other than simply addressing the skill itself of being able to write. From this light 'writing' takes the shape of what others want the writer to achieve, resulting in limited attempts to write in accordance with teachers' preferences. The sample of the present study indeed indicated that students rarely felt engaged in writing when writing for teachers in comparison with writing for an external audience.

Changing wider agendas is difficult, yet changing the individual practices of practitioners can be easier to achieve. For this, I call each teacher to re-evaluate his/her values in terms of letting students experience 'writing' and authoring by engaging in meaning making and conscious knowledge transformation, which nowadays is accessible through technology.

Based on the present study it is hoped that there is a way for creating a community of writers and readers in which they feel secure and engaged so that they can write for each other without feeling self-conscious or worried about using bizarre language where mistakes are watched out for. This could include

teachers, who as scaffolders and supervisors, help second language writers. Finally, I call for the community of ESL teachers and researchers to act upon the implications presented in the current study which sees the positive potential of integrating technology into the teaching of everyday writing.

Appendices

Appendix 1.1: Writing Learning Objectives in the Foundation Year

Programme General:

Students should keep a writing file which is checked by the teacher twice a semester

Editing should concentrate on key grammar items for the level; avoid correcting all errors, especially at lower levels

Encourage peer editing as a classroom activity at all levels

Encourage students to note down, correct and keep a log of their errors Learning Objectives:

1. write texts of a minimum 250 words, showing control of layout, organization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure grammar and vocabulary

2. Produce a written report of minimum 500 words showing evidence of research, note-taking, review and revision of work, paraphrasing, summarising, use of quotations and use of references.

3. produce a coherent, edited text

4. write a first and second draft

5. write a text/report of three related paragraphs of 150 – 200 words using graphical or textual prompts to express description of a process, description of a structure, or an explanation (cause and effect)

6. cite sources in line with academic conventions

7. create detailed, organized notes from research materials

8. use discourse markers to indicate result (thus; accordingly; as a results, consequently, etc)

9. use a range of discourse markers to express listing/ chronology/ sequence/ addition/exemplification/result

10. write 150 -200 words of a range of text types, e.g. compare and contrast; cause and effect; expressing an opinion; transferring data from charts and graphs

11. Interpret and describe graphical information, e.g. graphs, tables, etc.

12. write paragraphs of around 100 – 150 words, using some guidelines, e.g. notes taken from a text (written or spoken)

13. establish coherence between paragraphs: introduction, body and conclusion

14. use appropriate links and transition signals

15. produce paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting points

16. write a topic sentence and a concluding sentence

17. organize ideas in an outline

18. write sentences using conjunctions of comparison and contrast

19. compose a text comparing two things/places

20. compose a text describing and event or invention

21. compose a text describing a routine

22. compose a short text describing a graph or table

23. proof read and edit one"s own text

24. convert notes into a text

25. establish a link between the topic sentence and the next sentence

26. use simple linking devices

27. compose a text on expressing an opinion

28. produce a short, edited text

29. write a first draft

30. make a brief outline for a text

31. select and order ideas

32. develop a focusing / topic sentence for a text

33. write sentences using simple present in the active voice using the 1st person singular

34. write simple sentences using simple present in the active voice using 3rd person singular

35. write simple sentences with the time markers (first, second, next, after that, then, finally)

36. write compound sentences using cohesive markers (and, but, so)

37. write complex sentences using “because”

38. write simple sentences with the correct SVO / SVC order

39. identify basic sentence structure SVO / SVC

40. brainstorm ideas based on stimulus material.

Appendix 3.1: course specification for Class 1 and Class 2

Class1 course code: ENGLISH 1222

This course is designed for students with IELTS equivalence of 5.0

This course build upon the academic listening, speaking, reading and writing work commenced in ENGL 1111.

The course is allocated 10 hours per week and it is expected that one class teacher will deliver the 120-hour course to one class of 25 students.

Course objectives :

The course has the following specific objectives:

To enable students to participate in class discussions

To enable students to participate in lectures through strategic listening

To enable students to read and reflect on short academic texts using appropriate strategies

To enable students to compose short essays

To introduce students to a further 75-100 items on the Coxhead Academic Word List Learning outcomes In the following specifications of learning outcomes, it is assumed that learners will be able to use the core grammar and vocabulary presented in the Foundation Programme and ENGL 1111. So these items are not included in the specifications below which relate solely to the coverage expected in ENGL 1222. Those items shown in blue are not, currently, supported in any of the course books in use and will need to be supported through teacher initiative. At the end of the course, students should be able to: In lectures/presentations:

Identify lecture language that signals a definition

Recognise lecture language that signals a example

Recognise lecture language that signals an explanation

Recognise lecture language that prioritises information

Use abbreviations in notes

Use visual forms in notes

Organise ideas in a chart in notes

Highlight key ideas in notes

Give an 8-minute presentation

In small-group discussion:

Ask for more information during a discussion

Agree and disagree during a discussion

Disagree politely during a discussion

Support opinions during a discussion

Connect your ideas to other people's ideas in a discussion When reading shorter academic texts:

Identify time and sequence markers

Read numerical tables

Make inferences

Distinguish fact from opinion

Use a further 75-100 words on the Coxhead Academic Word List

Recognize noun, verb, adjective and adverb forms of AWL words

Use a monolingual dictionary to look up unfamiliar words, check pronunciation using phonemic symbols

Recognise a direct quotation

Recognise a paraphrase of another writer's ideas When writing shorter academic essays

Use a standard thesis + support paragraph structure

Display an awareness of the importance of unity and coherence in a paragraph

Display an awareness of the structure of the short (3-4 paragraph) essay

Go through a simple planning-drafting-editing writing process

Use mind-maps and other brainstorming techniques

Show awareness of the structure of opinion essay writing as a rhetorical mode

Show awareness of the structure of comparison and contrast writing as a rhetorical mode

Show awareness of the structure of cause and effect writing as a rhetorical mode

Distinguish statements of fact from opinion

Recognise counter-arguments and refutations

Use quantity expressions (e.g. most, some, a lot of, many) in writing

Use connectors to show support or opposition in writing opinion essays junctions and punctuation to avoid 'run-on' sentences

Use connectors to show similarity and contrast

Use comparatives in writing

Recognise and use causal chains in writing cause and effect essays

Use Future Simple (will)

Use will + so that

Use Conditional I and II structures

Use basic APA referencing conventions.

Show some understanding of what plagiarism is and why and how it is to be avoided.

Integrate a source into a text through direct quotation or paraphrase

Other:

Carry out a survey

Present the results in chart form

Carry out an online search for information

Teaching and Learning Methods English 1222 is designed to follow the syllabus of the second half of each of Effective Academic Writing 2, Lecture Ready 1 and Inside Reading 1. These books meet the majority of the LOs specified above. However it is important that teachers do not simply deliver the textbooks but use them imaginatively, and where necessary use supplementary materials, to help students achieve the LOs. In many cases a tightly structured process that goes beyond the structure of the textbook may be needed. For example at the end of Unit

5 of Lecture Ready it is suggested that students carry out a simple piece of survey research in their college. It is likely that this would entail a number of stages, with each of which students might require support. Students should be encouraged to set language learning goals which guide their independent learning. They should also be encouraged to review the reading, listening and writing materials independently and to make use of any self-access material available. Additional homework should be assigned. This could take the form of small writing tasks, such as a diary, "vocabulary sheets" where the student must submit ten or so new words learned, their meanings, their different forms and a sentence to show they know the meaning and sentence fill sheets—x number of words are given and they must choose the correct word for a gap in a sentence. Preferably, the words given would be in a different form than is needed to fill the gap. In addition, there should be some focus on grammar activities. Student workload

In-class tuition: 10 hours per week

Independent study (vocabulary, grammar, writing, speaking, pronunciation and spelling): 3.5 hours per week Assessment Continuous assessment: Project on a major-related topic

1 presentation	20 %
1 report	30 %
Total	50 %

4

Final Exam

Language knowledge	5%
Reading	10%
Listening	10%
Speaking (paired-discussion)	10%
Writing	15%

Total	50%

Mandatory course requirements

Students are required to attend a minimum of 80% of classes in this course.

Students are required to complete all assessment tasks. Student text requirements

Inside Reading 1

Lecture Ready 1

Effective Academic Writing 2

Class 2 Course Specifications: Advanced Writing II

Course Code: ENSP 1225

Credit Hours: 3

Contact Hours: 4

Course Type: Compulsory

Prerequisites: Advanced Writing I (ENSP1122)

Semestrial Contact Hours: 6

Course Syllabus

Course Name: Advanced Writing II

Semester: Spring 2016

Teacher: -

Office Number: -

Office Hours:

1. Course Description

The aim of this course is to introduce ELT students to effective communication for academic contexts. Through task-based activities, students will explore the rhetorical dimensions of writing typical of these contexts, such as description, narration, argument, etc. to write coherent, cohesive, and meaningful academic texts. Moreover, through guided practice, students will learn the processes of planning, composing, reviewing, editing and delivering academic communication to appropriate audiences.

2. Course Objectives

By the end of this course, the students are expected to be able to:

1. Write cohesive, well-annotated and cited proposals.
2. Write cohesive, well-annotated and cited research papers.
3. Prepare coherent, well annotated and cited oral reports.

3. Course Structure

Week	Date	Topic/Theme	Contents	Remarks
1	31/1/2016 – 4/2/2016	**Introduction & review**	• Understanding classification: essay and paragraph • Editing; polishing, agreed corrections symbols and codes for marking errors • Academic register • Quoting • Paraphrasing • Summarizing • Academic honesty / plagiarism • Citing • Referencing based on APA style	Hand-outs PowerPoint Supplementar materials Websites
2	7/2/2016 – 11/2/2016	**Comparison & Contrast essay**	• Similarities & differences • Brainstorming; planning; outlining • Writing the first draft • Supervised peer editing of the first draft • Revising & rewriting the first draft • Submitting the final draft	
3	14/2/2016 – 18/2/2016	**Argumentative essay**	• Expressing & justifying opinions • Brainstorming; planning; outlining • Supervised peer editing of the first draft • Revising & rewriting the first draft • Submitting the final draft	
4	21/2/2016 – 25/2/2016	**Cause and effect essay**	• Understanding causal relationship • Brainstorming; planning • Writing the first draft • Editing the first draft • Submitting the final draft	

5	28/2/2016 – 3/3/2016	**Introducing the secondary research project + Planning**	• Choosing a research topic; narrowing the topic down • Preparing a research action plan	
6	6/3/2016 – 10/3/2016	**Writing a proposal**	• Literature review • Information gathering and research techniques	
7	13/3/2016 – 17/3/2016	MID-TERM EXAMS		
8	20/3/2016 – 24/3/2016	**Finalizing the proposal**	• Research proposal and research paper tentative outline	Proposal due
9	27/3/2016 – 31/3/2016	**Written project introduction**	• Writing • Editing • Rewriting	
10	3/4/2016 – 7/4/2016	**Written project literature review**	• reading comprehension and accurate summary of an author's main points	
11	10/4/2016 – 14/4/2016	**Written project literature review**	• Supervised writing process • paraphrasing, moving from description to interpretation	
12	17/4/2016 – 21/4/2016	**Written project literature review**	• Supervised writing process Writing an analytical summary that goes beyond mere agreement/ disagreement	
13	24/4/2016 – 28/4/2016	**Referencing & abstract**	• Annotated bibliography (at least 8 resources documented in APA format) • writing the abstract of the research	

14	1/5/2016 – 5/5/2016	**Oral presentation techniques (delivering academic communication to appropriate audiences)**	• Organizing the presentation • Developing effective introductions, transitions, and conclusions • Choosing effective visuals • Choosing effective styles of delivery • Supervised preparations for final draft of research paper and oral reports	Project due
15	8/5/2016 – 12/5/2016	PRESENTATIONS		
16	15/5/2016 – 19/5/2016	STUDY WEEK		
17	22/5/2016 – 26/5/2016	FINAL EXAMS		
18	29/5/2016 – 2/6/2016	FINAL EXAMS		

4. Assessment

Participation = 10%

Mid-semester Exam = 20%

Final written project = 20%

Final Exam = 50%

5. Glossary

Definition of basic terms

6. Form (mode) of teaching

Seminar/classroom workshops with emphasis on discussion, small group activities, peer teaching and feedback.

7. Required Textbooks and other Materials

No textbook. Handouts and PowerPoints will be given.

Appendix 3.2: Study plan for English language Major

Rostaq College of Education

Admission & Registration Section

Study Plan for English Language

تخصص اللغة الانجليزية

Semester 1 Academic Year /

Course Code&No	Course Title	Credit hours	Theory	Practice	Prerequisites
ENSP 1224	Listening and Speaking	3	2	2	Foundation
COMP 2001	Introduction to Computer I	2	1	2	Foundation
ENSP 1122	Advanced Writing I	3	2	2	Foundation
ENSP 1121	Advanced Reading and Vocabulary	3	2	2	Foundation Year
ENSP 1123	Grammar and Usage I	3	2	2	Foundation
ENSP 1212	Phonetics and Phonology	3	2	2	Foundation
		17	11	12	

Semester 2 Academic Year /

Course Code&No	Course Title	Credit hours	Theory	Practice	Prerequisites
ENSP 1225	Advanced Writing II	3	2	2	ENSP1122
ENSP 1226	Grammar and Usage II	3	2	2	ENSP1123
COMP 2002	Introduction to ComputerII	2	1	2	COMP 2001
ENSP 1111	Introduction to Linguistics	3	2	2	
ENSP 2151	Literature I	3	2	2	
EDUC 600	Educational Foundations	3	3	-	
		17	12	10	

Semester 3 Academic Year /

Course Code&No	Course Title	Credit hours	Theory	Practice	Prerequisites
ENSP 2113	Morphology and Lexical Semantics	3	2	1	ENSP 1111
ENSP2228	Report Writing	2	2	-	ENSP 1225
ENSP 3217	Readings in Applied Linguistics	3	2	1	ENSP 1111
ENSP 3134	Reading and Writing Skills Development	3	2	2	
PSYC 210	Educational Psychology	2	2	-	
ISLM4405	Islamic Culture	2	2	-	
Arab 2003	Practical Arabic Language Skills	2	2	-	
		17	14	4	

Semester 4 Academic Year /

Course Code&No	Course Title	Credit hours	Theory	Practice	Prerequisites
ENSP 2114	Syntax and Structural Semantics	3	2	1	ENSP2113
ENSP 3135	Vocabulary and Grammar Language Skills Development	3	2	2	
ENSP 4152	Children's Literature	3	2	2	
HIST1008	Oman Across History	2	2	-	
CURR 107	ELT Methods of Teaching	3	3	-	
CURR 088	Educational Technology Using IT	3	2	2	comp2002
		17	13	7	

Semester 5 Academic Year /

Course Code&No	Course Title	Credit hours	Theory	Practice	Prerequisites
ENSP 2232	Initial Literacy Skills Development	3	2	2	
ENSP 4221	Advanced Listening Comprehension	2	1	2	
ENSP 4222	Creative Writing				
ENSP 4223	Debating and Communication				
ENSP 3228	Error Recognition and Correction	3	2	2	
EDUC 800	School Management	2	1	2	
CURR 170	Practicum 1	3	0	6	CURR 107
ENSP 4245	ELT School Curriculum Analysis	2	1	2	
PSYC 250	Assessement	3	3	-	
		18	10	16	

Semester 6 Academic Year /

Course Code&No	Course Title	Credit hours	Theory	Practice	Prerequisites
ENSP 2215	Language Acquisition	3	2	1	
ENSP 3211	Psycholinguistics	2	1	2	ENSP 1111
ENSP 3212	Sociolinguistics				
ENSP 3213	Discourse Analysis				
ENSP 3133	Oral/Aural Language skills Development	3	2	2	
PSYC 240	Developmental Psychology	3	3	-	
CURR 180	Practicum 2	3	0	6	CURR 170
CURR 108	Classroom Research & Teacher Development	3	3	-	
		17	11	11	

Semester 7 Academic Year /

Course Code&No	Course Title	Credit hours	Theory	Practice	Prerequisites
ENSP 2231	Communicative Language Teaching Development	3	2	1	CURR 107
ENSP 3241	Language Through Stories	3	2	2	
ENSP 3116	General Translation	3	2	1	
ENSP 4251	World Literature	2	1	2	ENSP 2151
ENSP 4252	Literature 2				
ENSP 4253	Contemporary Literature and Poetry				
CURR 190	Practicum 3	5	0	10	CURR 180
		16	7	16	

Semester 8 Academic Year /

Course Code&No	Course Title	Credit hours	Theory	Practice	Prerequisites
ENSP 4143	Differential Learning and Independent Learning	3	2	2	
PSYC 4138	& Research Methodology Statistics	2	1	2	
ENSP 4142	Language through the Arts	3	2	2	
CURR 200	Practicum 4	5	0	10	CURR 190
		13	5	16	

Appendix 3.3: Diary Supporting sheet

What is diary? Is to talk about something in your life in a way that allows you discuss (or recount) important moments, difficulties and challenges. It entails: telling about events, recounting conversations, and disclosing personal thoughts. Remember that the diary will become "your best friend, silent confessor, or witness. You will eventually trust your diary with anything, even your biggest secrets."

Features of Language:

- Time connectives (first, second, after that, then..)
- Informal language
- written in first person (I)
- Past tense
- Opinion

Examples of diaries (we will read and discuss excerpts from them):

Diary of a wimpy kid series (collection of 10 books), Diary of Anne Frank: Diary of a young girl, Diary of Omani princess (Arabic), Diary of a fasting person (Arabic)

Type of your diaries: Diary of learning writing (specifically you should reflect about what happened in your writing course. You can write about something you enjoyed, or something you found difficult (to reflect on it). You can write about something which made you frustrated.

Start using your diary app (help will be provided in session):

1- **Go to Day One**
2- **Sign up for an account (optional)**
3- **Start writing entries**

Appendix 3.4: Blogging supporting sheet (session3)

What is a blog? It is simply a web page that is regularly updated by a person or a group of people. It is a form of online writing for public or a particular group of readership. The main contents consist of **entries** (by author of the blog) and **comments** (by readers). The content can be both visual and written (aka: texts, videos, or photos, links).

Examples of blogs in the community around you:

http://howtolivelikeanomaniprincess.blogspot.com/

http://dhofarigucci.blogspot.com/

http://khaleejia.blogspot.com/

http://themoonsmile2.blogspot.com/

http://www.diary-of-ange.com/page/2/

http://livinginoman.com/

http://bedouinvictoriagirl.blogspot.com/

http://omancommunityblog.blogspot.com/

Characteristics of a good blog

- It has a purpose of publishing one's written work
- Easy to read (and varied demonstrations (pictures, videos)
- Continuous update and follow up of comments

Blogging on your phone? Go to WordPress app. (support will be provided in session 3). You need to:

1- Create an educational blog. (this will be completed together in class with me)
2- Make a blog entry on a cultural topic (traditions, Omani cloths (Kuma, women dresses, Omani food) to a global community (the reader will be anyone around the world).

Other tasks will be added in alliance with class topics/consultation with the teacher.

Appendix3.5: list of prompts for diary

Question/cue for diary	response	No response
Write: what is your current level at writing? Can today's Class help support your writing?	16	1
Write a reflection on an activity/activities done this week in your Writing class	16	1
What KEEPS the flow of ideas for writing (for example, when you are in a quiet place? late at night?) What STOPS you writing? (for example: no ideas, limited vocabulary, not suitable place/time)?	17	-
what tasks help you more to improve your writing skill (talk about the tasks you took in classrooms). Please explain (give reasons for) your response	14	3
What are the important things you pay attention to when you write an academic essay?	15	2
How writing a project (academic text) for your teacher is different from completing a task in classroom	8	11
What do you like about blogging	6	11

Appendix 3.6: Observation (example)

OBSERVATION 3 Class 2 **Date of observation: 9th March 2016** **Time: 10-11:40** **Lesson/Subject: Writing for Academic Purposes**			
Activity	Teacher interaction Note what the teacher says about (purpose of the task, audience of task, quality criteria of task)	Students responses (verbal and oral)	Comments
Explain CAUSE-EFFECT	1-T tripping while carrying a bundle of books. 2- T asks about the action (cause and effects). T asks: what was the cause? what was the effect?	S replay cause, result	
Demonstrate examples on Overhead projector	-T connects laptop to OHP: -T ask: which one is why? And what? What words for cause-effect in essay? Who can give full sentences? T: more transitions for CAUSE-EFFECT?	-S: why is cause, what is what S: because, so, when, if S: if when you come to the class tomorrow i will give you your essays S: if it rains tomorrow there will be no class tomorrow Ss: as a result, consequently, as a consequence, , therefore, affected by,	OHP not working, T doesn't waste time, alternatively asking Ss questions

Classify words for Cause-Effect	T draws a table on WB, asks for types of transitions		Ss do not copy examples to their notebook, Ss not provided with materials
Analysis of essay	T distributes essays for analysis: hook, thesis statement, main topic sentences and supporting sentences	T gets help from IT while Ss on task T comes back and start asking general questions: oral feedback from students.	Reading example
Movie to show relation of CAUSE-EFFECT (3 short movies)	R: which one they say comes first? in writing can we mention effect first? Example?	Ss replying to T S: when you write you can start with a cause or you can start with effect I didn't come to college yesterday, because I was sick. Angla was happy because she ate cake	Oral discussion on main concept of C/E. Oral sentences from Ss.

Appendix 3.7: Interview I on academic essay

-**General**:

Do you write out of school? – What kinds of writing? What medium (pen or computer) Which language? For what purpose?

When (if ever) is writing enjoyable? Not enjoyable? To what extent do you feel you can express your ideas (opinion) in writing?

For what purposes do you write? What does writing mean for you as a 'writer' or a person? Is it only something taught in classroom and practised to get marks?

-Do you think writing in classroom (English) differs from writing in Arabic? Do you find it difficult or easy to express yourself in English (SL)? What issues do you focus on when you write assignments/academic essay? Why? Do you keep a personal diary? In Arabic/English?

- **Discuss the process of writing.** What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you want to write/ when the teacher gives you a task? What are the main things you think are important to pay attention to while writing? How do you choose a topic, i.e. likeness, familiarity, prior knowledge, format and construct (grammatically will make less mistakes)? Do you write a plan? Do you stick to it? Do ideas come to you while writing as well as before writing? If so, what do you do with new ideas? What do you do with the plan? Are they times when you don't know what to write? – If yes, what do you do?

How often do you rewrite your ideas? How often do you check a dictionary for new words? Why? How often do you ask your teacher to give you a translation of a particular phrase? What kind of word-level changes do you make? What kind of sentence-level changes do you make? Do you ever decide to change the structure of what you write – do you always stick with the plan?

What do good writers <u>do</u> when they are writing an academic essay?

-**Discuss what students think of teachers' emphasis on audience in classroom**

-Discuss students' responses and feelings about written feedback on their work (and what steps they will take to make their written work (this aims to uncover the relationship between teacher behaviour and students' written work) example of questions: Do you think the main reader

of your texts is your teacher? Does is matter if the teacher will read the work or not? Does it matter if there are marks assigned to tasks? Will it affect the content and length of writing of your work? Do you usually spend quality time at home (when you are alone) and express your thoughts or feelings in writings? (The same questions will be asked in interview 3.)

What does your teacher think makes a good academic essay? (What is your teacher looking for in an academic essay?)

What do you think makes an academic essay a good essay?

What do you do well when you write an academic essay?

What do you need to improve?

Appendix 3.8: Interview II on blogs Date:

Writing in Society

What kind of writing is taught in school? Why? What kind of writing should be taught in school – why?

Is it important to be a good writer? Why?

If you write on-line what difference does it make to: What is written (content)? How it is written (process – planning – drafting - editing – revision? Who reads it (audience)

Do you think online writing is safe/good alternative for traditional means of writing (more accessibility to readers, quick, ..)? Can it enhance discussions (make discussion easier, increase participation) on issues that are important for improving society?

-Discuss blog uses, do you blog outside school or not? Do you tend to write your personal thoughts outside of classroom context? If so, for what purposes? Are you comfortable writing personal judgement/ critique of issues occurring in social life (for example commenting on suitability of behaviours of peers) Do you think it is appropriate to publish your thoughts online (on twitter, or blogs) in form of poems/prose? With whom do you share your personal thoughts? Why?

-Discuss the relationship between knowledge and social action (How is writing a blog different from writing in classroom? Do you think it is important to include blogging as part of learning writing/construction? Do you think it is important for your life/ or your personal construction? What topics do you like to share with your friends? What factors (important things) do you consider when blogging?

-Process of **writing** Do you write a plan? Do you stick to it? Do ideas come to you while writing as well as before writing? If so, what do you do with new ideas? What do you do with the plan? Are there times when you don't know what to write? – If yes, what do you do?

How often do you rewrite your ideas? How often do you check a dictionary for new words? Why? How often do you ask your teacher to give you a translation of a particular phrase? What kind of word-level changes do you make? What kind of sentence-level changes do you make? Do you ever decide to change the structure of what you write – do you always stick with the plan?

What do good writers do when they are writing a blog?

-Discuss their blogs, i.e**.** to whom have you addressed your thoughts (who is the reader of your blog)? Why you have used this structure/topic….. or what do you mean by this …. (from their blogs)? Is this tailored to the needs/expectations of the reader? Does knowledge of a particular linguistic form influence it in writing diary/blog? Do you think the reader always understands what is written?

-Discuss the actual relationship between the author and audience, i.e. did having public readers influence the way you write? What ideas come to your mind when you think about the readers? How is this kind of reader different from teachers? (Discuss any comments they have for their blogs).

What makes a good blog?

How do you get better at writing a blog?

Are the skills needed to write a good blog different from writing skills more generally? How/Why not?

Can writing a blog help improve writing skills – How/why not?

Appendix 3.9: Interview III (Focus group) Date:

Discuss the role of mobile phone in writing (reflecting).

- Do you think there is an effect of using technology on one's life?

-Does it change ones' life?

-What do you think about using technology in teaching?

-Describe the quality of time spent for writing itself? (Did you find it easy/burdensome) did it add any value to the usual routine of your daily activities (for example did it make writing things quicker)?

-Was using your phone helpful for you to see the progress of your written work (for example when you wrote a diary)?

-Compare use of your phone to use of paper and pen for writing? Mention pro and cons

Discuss the role of e-diary and its uses

Can you give me a short definition of diary writing?

What is written in diary?

Who should be written in it?

Is it important for a writer?

How is it different from talking to oneself?

Do you think you have more ideas when writing a diary? (Aim: construct knowledge of their personality as writers/ thinking of the writing process and its importance)

Discuss main differences between Diary Blogging and Classroom writing

Which form of writing do you like the most? Why?

Which form needs planning and revising? Why?

How does the reader differ in each form of writing? Do you need to know your reader? What ideas do you have about each reader? How do you communicate with your reader while writing?

Appendix 3.10: Researcher Journal (extract)
Personal reflection about students' interviews on 11th April 2016

mostly, Teacher 2 focus on grammar and organization. However, developing a line of argument is not addressed in any way. The teacher gave alternative words for the words some students are using in texts

Students seem to be ether to 1) have their personal style and way of writing and ideas flow in their mind. For them, teachers' influence is low. They follow their own way of writing. they only know that they make grammatical mistakes.
2) some students refer to the teacher a lot. They take about what teacher wants, how to impress her, or what is required from them. At the level of writing, they don't care about 'what' or meaning making.
3) some consider writing as school-based and a requirement.

Generally, students in this class are mature, strategic, and try to come up with plans to get higher grades. They ask teacher a lot about elements of text. They seem to already have been exposed to argumentative essay writing. the students are able to talk about transition words for essay.

Appendix 3.11: Consent form and ethical approval form

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed by Ms. Wafa Al-Maawali about the aims and purposes of the project entitled "Students believes and strategies that underlie shifting a written style to a particular audience type using iPads in Oman Higher Education"

I understand that:

There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation and may also request that my data be destroyed.

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.

Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations.

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form.

All information I give will be treated as confidential.

The researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

....
(Signature of participant) (Date)

.....
(Printed name of participant)

.....
(Signature of the researcher)
Name: Wafa Al-Maawali

Contact phone number of researcher: +968 99806010 or +447721174434

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)
If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact my supervisor(s) at Exeter University: Dr. Judith Kleine-Staarman (email: j.kleine-staarman@exeter.ac.uk) or Dr. Susan Jones (email: susan.m.jones@exeter.ac.uk).

* when research takes place in a school, the right to withdraw from the research does NOT usually mean that pupils or students may withdraw from lessons in which the research takes place

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

Revised March 213

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Dear teacher/

These sheets include a short introduction of my research project. Here, you will find detailed information about research aims and my ethical obligations towards you.

1. Background

My name is Wafa Al-Maawali and I am a PhD student in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Exeter. The focus of my study is exploring how learners shift between written styles to write for different audience using iPads in Omani Higher Education. It will highlight strategies of learners and their perceptions. You are selected as a potential participant in this study because you are a lecturer who has experience in teaching writing at the college.

2. Your contribution

If you kindly agree to participate in this study, your contribution will involve the following:

- Assess written works of students' participants: your assistance to mark and assess the participants' works is required. You will be given 20 written essays to mark. Marking criteria and comments will be used for analysis purposes.

3. Ethical obligations

As a research participant you are entitled to ethical rights. The researcher will respect your rights according to the BERA (2011) guidelines (which can be provided upon request). These rights can be summarised into these main areas:

a. Firstly, voluntary participation: your decision to participate is voluntary and optional. Should you decide to participate or not will not affect you adversely in any way. Should you decide to participate in the study, you are free to withdraw at any time.

b. Secondly, confidentiality: all data that is obtained in this study will be kept anonymous. No reference of name or data that can be tied to you will be published. No one else will know about the content of data you share with the researcher. If either the dean or the Heads of Departments require a summary of data, no direct reference to you will be made. Pseudonym names will be used in reporting data in the thesis. Soft copy and hard copies of interviews and observation might be presented to the supervisors and assessing panel; however, your name will be kept anonymous to them by use of pseudonym names.

For further details please don't hesitate to contact me,

Wafa Al-Maawali, Phone +96899806010 or +447721174434, or via Email: wsma201@exeter.ac.uk

Should you have any concerns about this study, and have further enquiries, please contact my supervisors: Dr. Judith Kleine-Staarman, email: j.kleine-staarman@exeter.ac.uk or Dr. Susan Jones, email: susan.m.jones@exeter.ac.uk

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Thank you for you cooperation.

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Dear student/

These sheets include a short introduction of my research project. Here, you will find detailed information about research aims and ethical obligations towards you.

1. Background

My name is Wafa Al-Maawali and I am a PhD student in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Exeter. The focus of my study is using iPads to explore the different strategies that underpin writing for different audiences using iPads in Oman Higher Education. It will highlight issues related to the process the writer shifts when writing a diary, a blog, or an essay.

2. Description of the Study

If you kindly agree to participate in this study, your contribution will involve the following:

a. Attend workshops: you will be required to attend 7 workshops in which you will receive iPads to use during the workshops and at home. You will be given tasks to complete either with the researcher or at home. You should bring the iPad with you to each workshop. You are expected to complete 3 assignments outside classroom time. You are required to hand in the iPads after completing the assignments.

b. Interview: you will be interviewed individually at the end of some of these workshops. The interviews will be recorded and will take up around 30 minutes. It will involve two key issues: strategies for writing different tasks and believes and perceptions about each type of writing.

3. Ethical obligations

As a research participant you are entitled to ethical rights. I will respect your rights according to the BERA (2011) guidelines (which can be provided upon request). These rights can be summarised into these main areas:

a. Firstly, voluntary participation: your decision to participate is voluntary and optional. Should you decide to participate or not will not affect you adversely in any way. Should you decide to participate in the study, you are free to withdraw at any time.

b. Secondly, confidentiality: all data that is obtained in this study will be kept anonymous. No reference of names or data that can be tied to you will be published. No one else will know about the content of data you share with the researcher. If either the Dean or the Heads of

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Departments require a summary of data, no direct reference to you will be made. Pseudonym names will be used in reporting data in the thesis. Soft copy and hard copies of interviews and observation might be presented to the supervisors and assessing panel; however, your names will be kept anonymous to them by use of pseudonym names.

Feedback to the Participants:

Upon the completion of my research study, a summary of the findings will be sent by posted mail or the College email.

For further details please don't hesitate to contact me,

Wafa Al-Maawali, Phone +96899806010 or +447721174434, or via Email: wsma201@exeter.ac.uk

Should you have any concerns about this study, and have further enquiries, please contact my supervisors: Dr. Judith Kleine-Staarman, email: j.kleine-staarman@exeter.ac.uk or Dr. Susan Jones, email: susan.m.jones@exeter.ac.uk

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Thank you for your cooperation.

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses.

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications and view the School's Policy online.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Wafa Al-Maawali

Your student no: 630059163

Return address for this certificate: 19 Sandford Walk, EX12ES, EXETER

Degree/Programme of Study: PhD in Education

Project Supervisor(s): Judith Kleine-Staarman, and Susan Jones

Your email address: wsma201@exeter.ac.uk or w.almawali@hotmail.com

Tel: 07721174434

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed:.....**date: 27/11/2014**

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: March 2013

Certificate of ethical research approval

TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT:

Exploring Strategies and Perceptions underpinning Writing for Different Audiences using iPads in Omani Higher Education

1. Brief description of your research project:

This study will explore the strategies that ESL learners use to shift and change the content of their written outcomes to suit different audiences (oneself, Teacher, or community) using the affordances of iPads in classroom and outside classroom. It will aim to uncover the underlying beliefs about the roles and purposes of each writing format from the students' (being the writers) perspectives. Another aim is to study the role of iPads for teaching writing practice in ESL classrooms. Consequently, it will add value as to what is being practiced in writing classes where writing a diary or blogs are being as useful authentic tools to develop good writers; by seeking to understand what happens when the content, the context and the audiences changes.

The methodology of the study is a qualitative case study. With regard to the sample, it will contain a group of 20 students and two teachers from Rustaq College of Applied Sciences in Oman. The student participants will be divided into two groups: one group of 10 will be supported in 7 workshops in the first half of the semester; another 10 students will be supported in the second half of the semester. As for the teachers, they will evaluate and assess the students' written works produced in the workshops. Concerning the methods of data collection, there will be two: interviews; and documents written and developed by the students. All students will be interviewed individually after each writing task on their writing strategies, content of their written works, and underlying perceptions. Some form of stimulated recall may be used in the interviews. Written documents- diaries, blogs, and written work for assessment- will be collected.

2. Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

The participants of the study will be teachers and students at Rustaq College of Applied Sciences in Oman.

1) The teachers will have experience in teaching writing skills. They may be of multi-nationality and teaching at different departments at the college. Their assistance will be required to mark and/or give formative feedback on the participants' work.
2) The students will range from 19-24 years old. They are enrolled in different specialisations (Teachers of English, majoring in International Business, or majoring in Information Technology) at the college.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

3. <u>informed consent:</u> Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document. a blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents: **Each consent form MUST be personalised with your contact details.**

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: March 2013

A consent form will be downloaded from the Graduate School of Education website and will be personalised with the researcher's contact details (see accompanied draft consent form). It will be accompanied by information sheets that will include the purpose of the study, data collection methods, samples, time frame, and ethical procedures (see accompanied draft information sheet). Both consent form and information sheets will be distributed to three main categories of recipients. Firstly, the administrations of the college will receive a formal letter that includes both consent form and information sheets. After approval is received, the other two categories of participant, that is students and teachers, will receive consent forms and information sheets. To ensure the fully voluntary participation and clear understanding of study process, I will meet both students and teachers separately. I will explain in detail the nature of the study, its purposes, the process of collecting data, how data will be collected, procedures that are taken to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time.

4. <u>anonymity and confidentiality</u>

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained at all stages of research following BERA (2011) guidelines. Firstly, the name of the institution will not be mentioned; it will be referred to by use of pseudonym in the thesis. Secondly, the names of the participants will not be referred to; they either will be referred to using alphabet letters or pseudonym names. Thirdly, the data will be kept in a secure place and destroyed after the thesis has been completed. The recorded data will be transcribed as soon as possible and then both transcripts and audio recorded materials will be kept in securely locked files. They will only be used for the purpose of this study and will not be shared with another person, other than my supervisors. They will be deleted once the thesis is completed or once they are not needed any longer.

5. Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Two main methods of data collection will be used: semi-structure interviews and written documents. They are detailed as follows:

1- **Interviews with students**: These include individual interviews with the students who will attend the workshops. These interviews will be recorded. Any intimidating or personal comment will be avoided. The interview will be about the students' writing experience generally and specifically about the switching voice and style to write to different audience. The participants will be reminded that they can refuse to respond to any question that they do not want to.

2- **Written documents**: These include the written feedback of the teacher participants and the written outcomes of the student participants. The teachers marking criteria and comments will be used for analysis purposes. The students will produce three different written styles: diary entries, blog posts, and essays. These will be collected in classroom and outside classroom using applications of iPads to either record or post the requested work. The diaries could contain personal data. Therefore, the participants will be reminded that they might wish to consider removing any personal data that they do not want to share with the researcher. They will also be reminded of their right to refuse to share their diary with the researcher. During blogging, the participants will respond to each other's work; consequently, they will be reminded –in the workshops- about respecting each other's viewpoints to avoid hurt or misunderstanding that might be generated in the on-line conversations.

All data are qualitative in nature. The interviews are to be analysed through NVivo software to generate main themes that will be represented in the findings results. Students' written performances will be analysed through content analysis.

6. Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project - e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires, or

There are no specific details for this other than mentioned above.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: March 2013

7. **Special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.**

Not applicable

8. **Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):**

Not applicable.

***This form should now be printed out**, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.*

***N.B**. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor*

This project has been approved for the period: 01/12/2014 **until:** 01/12/2015

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): ....**date:**.....27/11/2014.....

***N.B. To Supervisor:** Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.*

GSE unique approval reference:.....D/14/15/14.....

Signed:.....**date:**.....8/12/14.....
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

Appendix 5.1: Example of Essay: Farah

Nowadays, cities and towns are developed year by year. The population is growing and the buildings are increasing. Therefore, many crimes happen in cities like killing, stealing and so on. Policemen try to solve this crime and catch thieves but some crimes are very difficult so, it need a long time to solve. The crimes are different in cities and towns. So, in my essay I will compare between crimes in a big city and crimes in a small town.

Living in a big city is riskier than living in a small town because it has a lot of buildings. It is serious crimes and professional criminals. There are many types of crimes in the big city like killing, stealing and other crimes. Killing in a big city is more than a small town. Also, it is difficult to the policemen to solve and catch thieves because it needs a long time. But in a big city policemen can use modern ways to solve crime. For example, they use fingerprints and use CSIs.

On the other hand, small town also has crimes. But, these crimes not very difficult like in a big city. Crimes in a small town are fewer than in a big city. Town criminals use simple weapons to kill. Policemen can solve crimes in easy ways like CSIs or fingerprints.

Although, there are differences between city and town also, there are some similarity between them. First, both of them have crimes. Second, using spy weapons in both of them.

In conclusion, the crimes spread out day after day around the world. The policemen try to decrease these crimes by new and strong lows.

Appendix 5.2: Example of Essay: Eram

Having a Driving License at the Age of Eighteen

Owning a driving license has become a fantasy dream for everyone especially teenagers. However, is it suitable for eighteen years old or it has to be obtained in older age? For a long time, I have held the opinion that the age of eighteen should be allowed to have a driving license in Oman for so many reasons.

Teenagers who are eighteen years old are more likely to spend their time at home with their families more than the others. It is so essential that they own a driving license for emergencies and some circumstances. For instance, if someone gets sick or hurt, it would be necessary to take him/her to the hospital without any delay. Certainly, if there is any delay in taking him/her to the hospital, he/she might be put in a very critical position. Moreover, teenagers are going to cover some of their needs in ease without wasting their time in trying to find someone out to help. It is such an advantage for them to become independent. Well, it is so clear that they should be allowed to have a driving license at the age of eighteen in Oman.

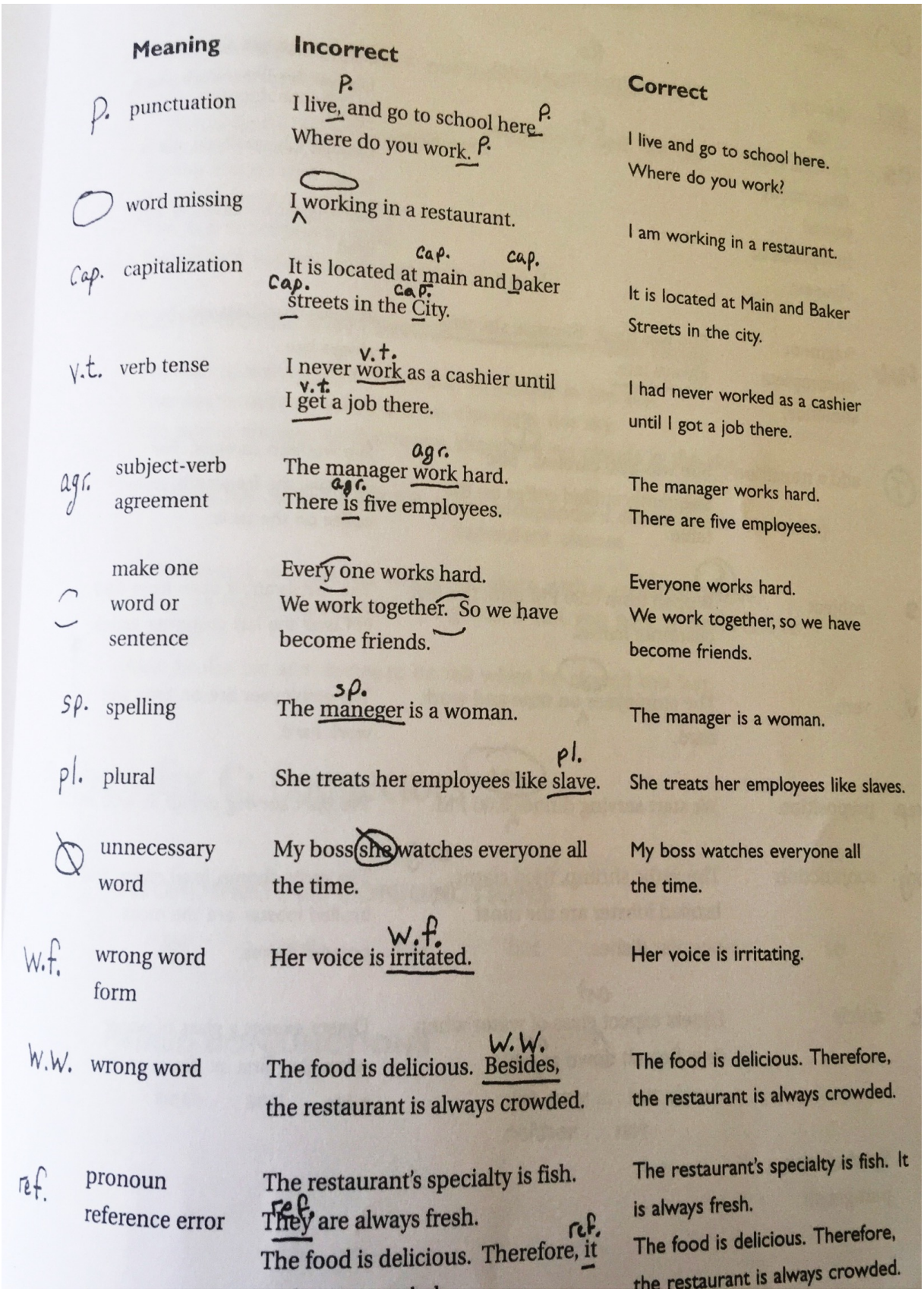
Furthermore, I can refute my opponent's idea by explaining that teenagers have plenty of time to learn driving without any rush. They can completely focus in learning and become competent drivers. In contrast, people who are older than eighteen years are busy with their life which distracts their focus while learning how to drive. The lack of focusing could increase the number of accidents in the future which is incredibly a dangerous issue. All these analyses prove that the age of eighteen is the best age to have a driving license.

Obviously, the readers who oppose my ideas might say that teenagers are too young to deal with cars which are something very complicated to be dealt with. Also, they are irresponsible enough to follow all the driving rules and respect the other drivers. Moreover, they are aggressive drivers who are more likely to have accidents. All the features above stand against the idea of having a driving license at the age of eighteen.

In conclusion, the age of eighteen has enough features to own a driving license. Also, it seems that the royal Oman police (ROP) find the age of eighteen a suitable age to do that since it allows them to have driving license long years ago until now. In my opinion, as a college student, they should

keep allowing them to have a driving license which is something so important and too comfortable.

Appendix 5.3: Correction Symbols: Class2



	Meaning	Incorrect	Correct
p.	punctuation	I live, and go to school here. Where do you work.	I live and go to school here. Where do you work?
○	word missing	I working in a restaurant.	I am working in a restaurant.
cap.	capitalization	It is located at main and baker streets in the City.	It is located at Main and Baker Streets in the city.
v.t.	verb tense	I never work as a cashier until I get a job there.	I had never worked as a cashier until I got a job there.
agr.	subject-verb agreement	The manager work hard. There is five employees.	The manager works hard. There are five employees.
⌒	make one word or sentence	Every one works hard. We work together. So we have become friends.	Everyone works hard. We work together, so we have become friends.
sp.	spelling	The maneger is a woman.	The manager is a woman.
pl.	plural	She treats her employees like slave.	She treats her employees like slaves.
⊘	unnecessary word	My boss she watches everyone all the time.	My boss watches everyone all the time.
w.f.	wrong word form	Her voice is irritated.	Her voice is irritating.
w.w.	wrong word	The food is delicious. Besides, the restaurant is always crowded.	The food is delicious. Therefore, the restaurant is always crowded.
ref.	pronoun reference error	The restaurant's specialty is fish. They are always fresh. The food is delicious. Therefore, it	The restaurant's specialty is fish. It is always fresh. The food is delicious. Therefore, the restaurant is always crowded.

WO	wrong word order	Friday always is our busiest night.	Friday is always our busiest night.
RO	run-on	Lily was fired she is upset.	Lily was fired, so she is upset. Lily was fired; therefore, she is upset.
	OR		
CS	comma splice (incorrectly joined independent clauses)	Lily was fired, she is upset.	Because Lily was fired, she is upset. Lily is upset because she was fired.
FRAG	fragment (incomplete sentence)	She was fired. Because she was always late.	She was fired because she was always late.
T	add a transition	She was also careless. She frequently spilled coffee on the table.	She was also careless. For example, she frequently spilled coffee on the table.
S.	subject	Is open from 6:00 PM until the last customer leaves.	The restaurant is open from 6:00 PM until the last customer leaves.
V.	verb	The employees on time and work hard.	The employees are on time and work hard.
prep.	preposition	We start serving dinner 6:00 PM.	We start serving dinner at 6:00 PM.
conj.	conjunction	The garlic shrimp, fried clams, broiled lobster are the most popular dishes.	The garlic shrimp, fried clams, and broiled lobster are the most popular dishes.
art.	article	Diners expect glass of water when they first sit down at table.	Diners expect a glass of water when they first sit down at the table.
¶	Symbol for a paragraph		

Appendix 6.1: Example of Essay: Amjad

Living in an A apartment and at Home: Comparison and Contrast

Nowadays, students must complete their studying after finishing school. There are many places to complete their studies in. One of these places is the college and most students go there. Of course the student will face many problems in there. What are the differences and similarities between living in an apartment and at home?

The most common things between living in an apartment and at home are food and furniture. In our apartment, my friends and I work together to cook the food especially for dinner. Also, each one in our apartment should pay some money to buy the food and other materials we need in the kitchen. It is a good thing to depend on yourself to cook your food. Moreover, I have the same furniture in my apartment that I have at home. Also I do my prayers in the masjid (mosque) which is within the same distance as the masjid back home.

On the other hand, there are many differences between living in an apartment and at home. The daily routine that I have of course will be different. For example, I wake up at10 o'clock at home, but in my apartment the time when I wake up depends on my lectures. Also, the time when I eat my meal in my apartment and at home is different. At home I eat the three meals which are the breakfast, lunch and dinner usually at same time, but in my apartment I do not eat some of my meals like breakfast and dinner at the same time.

Moreover, I must pay a lot of money to cover my needs more than at home. At home my father pays everything I want. For instance, I have to pay for the rent and food and electricity bill while I do not pay that at home.

Finally, there are many differences between living in an apartment and at home as well as similarities. The best place of course is the home. I can find everything that I want. And I would not feel homeless. Also, I know every corner in my home that makes me feel better than in my apartment.

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